

# Freeholds

## Hidden Glens



Leif Jones  
1995

For Changeling: The Dreaming

# Freeholds Hidden Glens

## Hidden from Mortal Eyes...

Freeholds, concealed by their Glamour from the eyes of mortals, are places of splendor that dot cities and countrysides across the Earth. Any site where Changelings gather may become a freehold, and some ancient glens containing natural wellsprings of Glamour still exist today.



## Enter a Realm of Fantasy!

Freeholds and Hidden Glens are fonts of Glamour, places where wondrous and magical effects are commonplace occurrences. Enchantment here is powerful; few can long resist the lure of these small islands of wonder.

## Freeholds and Hidden Glens

- ☉ Explores seven freeholds throughout Concordia, including noble and commoner freeholds;
- ☉ Reveals the secrets of the ancient trods;
- ☉ Includes guidelines for how to create freeholds for your own chronicle.



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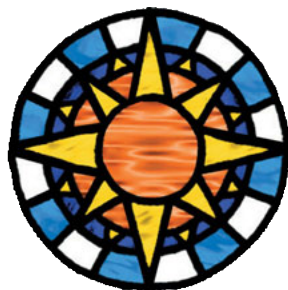


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# Freeholds Hidden Glens



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Leif Jones  
1995



# Introduction

*Where the wave of moonlight glosses  
The dim grey sands with light  
By far off furthest rosses  
We foot it all the night  
Weaving olden dances  
Mingling hands and mingling glances  
Till the moon has taken flight  
To and fro we leap  
And chase the frothy bubbles  
Whilst the world is full of troubles  
And is anxious in its sleep  
—W.B. Yeats, 'The Stolen Child'*

Freeholds are places of wonder and Glamour, where changelings may escape from the drudgery of the world. It is here that they may gather and feel safe from Banality, which constantly tears at their faerie souls. Freeholds are very special to the Kithain. Not only are they fonts of Glamour, but they are also gathering places. Changelings of all kith come to freeholds to be around others of their kind. There are many varieties of freeholds, each as unique as the pattern of morning dew. There are the lofty courts of the noble sidhe, resplendent in their finery; rustic taverns, where commoners meet to gather around a warm fire and talk of ages past, before the return of the sidhe; and many things in between.

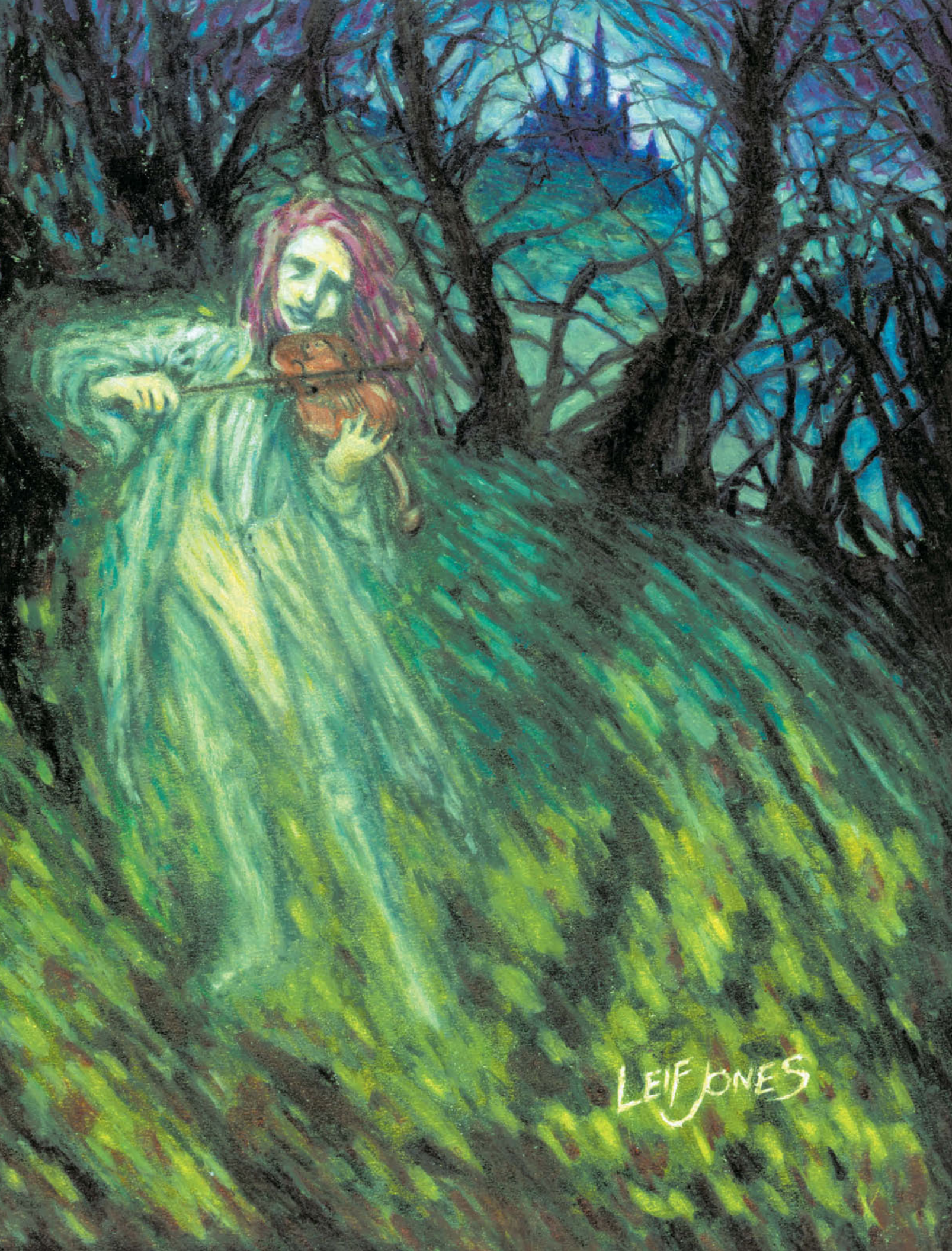
The Mists shroud mortal eyes from seeing a freehold for what it is, just as it shrouds a changeling's fae mien. An

abandoned warehouse might actually be a magnificent fortress, or a treehouse a spiraling tower. Anything is possible with the Dreaming.

## How to Use This Book

Described within this book are seven freeholds which can be found within the kingdom of Concordia. Each has its own theme and mood, ranging from a mountain hideaway containing one of the most ancient fae on Earth, to a commoner pub in Boston, Mass.

Each of these freeholds could easily be dropped into an existing chronicle. They come complete with plot hooks and story ideas; use them for just such a purpose, or instead, let them inspire you to creating your own freeholds and stories. Make these freeholds your own and let their Glamour infuse your stories.



LEIF JONES

# Chapter One: Dwellers in the Mountain

By Nicky Rea and Jackie Cassada

*They've pursued us now it seems forever, they've  
caught up on us like time,  
They've followed us close down every misbegotten  
highway,  
They haunt us like our crime,  
And we're guilty, yes we'll always plead guilty to all  
the spells they said we wove,  
Ah, just for me weave it one more time,  
Cast your spell of love.  
Take me in your arms and let me feel it one more time,  
The warm sweet breath of love...  
– Horslips, "The Warm Sweet Breath of Love"*

Part of the Appalachian mountain chain, the Cumberland Mountains of eastern Kentucky are among the oldest in the world; their weathered slopes bear testimony to the passage of the ages. With their verdant forests and pristine waters, these gentle hills have for centuries sheltered the children of the Dreaming who fled westward, escaping the encroaching tide of Banality that came in the wake of the Sundering. Here, among the towering rock formations set along the banks of the wide waterway that would later be known as the Rockcastle River, they built their faerie

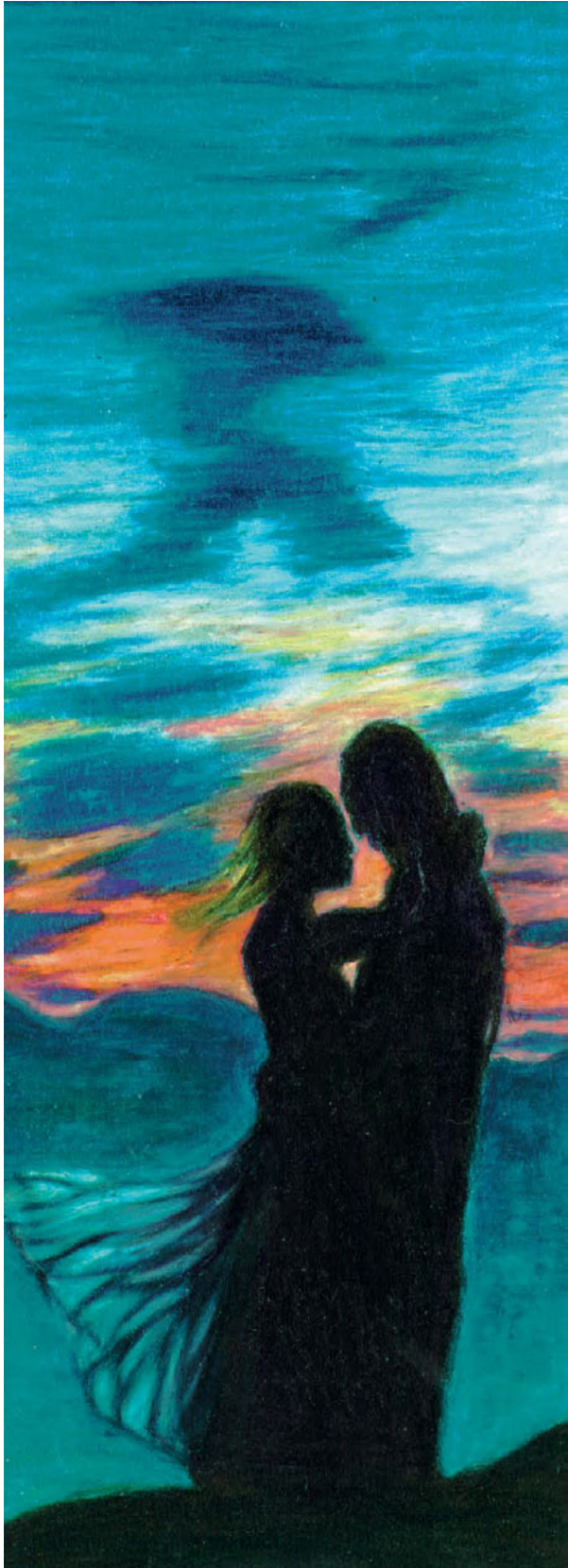
fortresses and dancing grounds, secure – for a time – in their isolation. When the Shattering forced the wholesale exodus of the sidhe, even these protected domains were abandoned and sealed against intrusion. Now, one of these ancient strongholds, called the High Castle for its mountaintop location, lives again. Two sidhe, bound together by their forbidden love and aided by a motley of commoners, have shattered the fortress' seals and sought refuge within its hidden towers.

## Laurel County, Kentucky and the Rockcastle River

On its way to becoming a tributary of the Cumberland River, the Rockcastle River forms the northern border of Laurel County, Kentucky. The fanciful, exotic rock formations that line its 75-mile course inspired the river's name and provide some of eastern Kentucky's most breathtaking scenery. Despite the ravagings of both the lumber and coal industries, the forested mountainsides of Laurel County still boast a wealth of poplars, oaks, hickories and other hardwood trees, as well as an abundance of yellow pines and mountain laurel. Interspersed among the steep cliffs jutting out from the surrounding hills are other, more intriguing rock formations, resembling multi-tiered wedding cakes, step-pyramids, or fortified castles.

Although many of these outcroppings stem from the erosive forces of wind and water, others have come about through less natural causes, in particular, the contour-method of strip mining, which creates a series of ledges or shelves that conform to the original slope of the mountain. These artificial landmarks, many of which are slowly being reclaimed by native vegetation, provide visible evidence of the hand of "progress" upon the face of the mountains.

The peak known as High Castle Mountain rises above its hilly neighbors, dominating the landscape near I-75 just before the interstate crosses the invisible border between Laurel and Rockcastle Counties. Carved into three rocky tiers resembling a bishop's miter, this ruggedly symmetrical tor bears the scars of its man-made wounds with regal dignity. The resurging plant life cascades down its length, spilling over the ledges formed by the machines of the strip miners and adorning the hillside like a dusting of emeralds. Seen from a distance, High Castle Mountain, once despoiled by human greed, is only now returning to a vestige of its former beauty. Ironically, it stands like some ancient faerie fortress overlooking its once pristine domain.



# The Fiona Fortress of High Castle

Visible only to Kithain eyes, however, are the chimerical ruins of a faerie fort, which lie strewn about the top of the mountain. Shattered crystal towers and fallen dawn-hued arches are overlain by the creepers, mosses, bushes and saplings which have taken root in the physical world. The ruined shards, buried under the mundane mountain growth, occasionally gleam wanly in the sunlight or wink feebly in response to the light from the stars. Amid the desolate glory lies a gray boulder, the doorway into the underground environs of High Castle. Due to an ancient enchantment, this entryway can only be seen for what it is by those who mean no harm to the current inhabitants of the stronghold.

The gray boulder splits apart and moves aside whenever a noble of House Fiona who is in need of shelter steps within the perimeter of what was once the faerie fort. A doorway into the mountain is thus revealed. The entrance is otherwise invisible, even to those with faerie Kenning, unless they stand atop the boulder and use a point of their own Glamour to command the doorway to become visible. Once seen, the door can be opened by simply tugging on the old pulling set into its center. Beyond the door is a set of stairs going down. If this person means harm to the mountain's inhabitants, however, the doorway remains cloaked by ancient enchantments designed to befuddle foes. The enchantments, placed by a full-blood fae noble, may be broken, but only by someone with sufficient power. The means to open the door may become the impetus for a quest in which characters must locate various ancient rhymes or magical treasures designed to force open such an enchanted portal.

Beyond the door, a broad, winding stairway leads down into a great room, once used for the gathering of all the inhabitants of the castle. Seemingly carved from coal, but faceted so that they will glimmer and glisten like black diamonds, the walls are lit by globes of swirling colors – faerie lanterns left by the former inhabitants, and the flickering radiance of the balefire, the heart of the castle. Four grand hallways, alternately gleaming in places and covered by fantastic tapestries, lead outward from the main room.

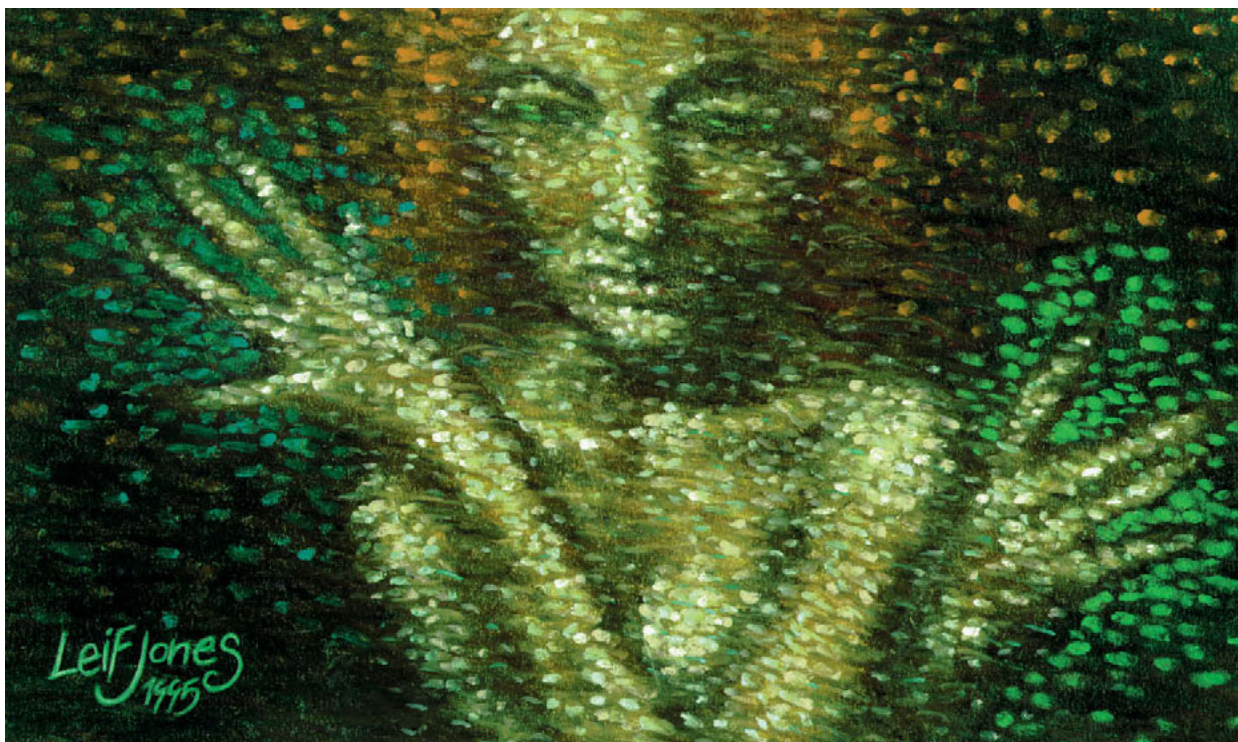
Along two of these are stately suites consisting of lavish parlors, baths, dressing rooms and bedrooms, which once served as the private quarters for the nobles of the household. Each branches at the far end into four more

halls, which contain lesser rooms and apartments for the other inhabitants. Some of these are maintained so that visitors will have comfortable quarters. The other two grand halls branch into kitchens, storage areas and workrooms, some of which have now been given over to studios where the inhabitants craft the items they sell. Among these are a stillroom where Cian'n makes his herbal concoctions, a potter's shed in which Lairdie throws pots (when she isn't tending the still and making moonshine), and Arienh's jewelry-making cubby. Harley has apparently discovered rooms even deeper in the mountain, where he sculpts, and Fletcher prefers to use the great hall as a woodworking shop for constructing musical instruments (to Lairdie's continual annoyance).

One hallway leads to a wondrous chimerical garden. Brilliant flowers and heady aromas surround a fresh-water spring (that served as the well for the castle) which bubbles up from below and reflects the lantern-light. The tone of the light from the lanterns changes throughout the day, moving from the rosy hues of dawn, to the brilliant midday sun, to the orange-red glow of sunset, and at last becoming the light of the moon and the starry sky. Many treasures, from furnishings to jewelry, are scattered throughout the fortress, deserted by their former owners when they fled from the onrushing tide of Banality. Though parts of the castle, particularly the outermost walls, are ruined and broken, the structure as a whole has withstood the test of time.

## Tamlir's Glen

Not far from High Castle Mountain, a ring of oaks and yellow birches surrounds a grassy, treeless mountain bald. A heavy curtain of enchantment cloaks this glen from mortal eyes, making it seem ordinary and uninviting. Faerie sight, however, reveals a different panorama of waving grasses and a wild profusion of flame-azaleas and red trilliums. Where the natural gateway into the circle would be, an ancient oak has been split apart, as if struck by a mighty bolt of lightning. To Kithain, the oak is obviously an old doorway, now cracked and blackened. Though it may be seen from afar, attempts to approach the bald are thwarted by some unknown enchantment which befuddles the senses and sends the inquisitive on a wild goose-chase through half the county. Kithain who keep their distance are, on rare occasions, rewarded. Once a month, on the night of the full moon, some claim to see a hazy figure rise up in the center of the bald, and, fiddle in hand, begin to play soft, ethereal melodies that travel on the wings of the night wind.



## History

*Come by the hills to the land  
where legend remains  
Where stories of old stir the heart  
and may yet come again  
Where the past has been lost and the future  
is still to be won  
And cares of tomorrow must wait  
till the day is done*

– Loreena McKennitt, “Come By the Hills”

## Lord Tamlin's High Castle


Well before Columbus' “discovery” of America, the fae came to the land they called Tir-na-N'og. Driven westward by the Sundering, a band of nobles of House Fiona, accompanied by their household of loyal commoners and under the leadership of Lord Tamlin the Fiddler, sought refuge in the blue hills of what would become eastern Kentucky, hoping that here they would be safe – at least for a time – from the inexorable tide of Banality. Along the western fringes of the Cumberland Mountains, amid hills as green and luxurious as the Caledonian highlands, they found their place of shelter. With high hearts and spirits made joyful by the renewal of hope, they set to work constructing a fortress atop a mountain that rose gracefully above its neighbors.

Inspired by the beauty of the mountain laurel and wild trillium that grew in profusion around them and the proud, defiant hunting cries of the bald eagles that soared above, these refugees of Banality created a chimerical castle in the image of their dreams. Only once was their work interrupted, by the sudden appearance of a brown-skinned, raven-haired woman clad in the skin of a white deer and bearing an eagle feather in her hand. A gray wolf stood at her side. The Fiona recognized her as being fae, but she was unlike any child of the Dreaming they had ever encountered.

The woman called herself Weeping Sky, and proclaimed that she was a messenger from the nunnehi, upon whose lands the Fiona were building. Exiles from their own beloved homelands, the Fiona realized the importance of the land to the nunnehi and told Weeping Sky of their troubles, offering her and her tribe many gifts in return for allowing them to occupy their chosen site. They swore oaths, backed by geasa, that they would encroach “this far, and no farther,” and opened their new freehold to visits from their sworn brethren, the nunnehi.

Together, nunnehi and Fiona dedicated a nearby mountain bald, surrounded by a ring of oaks and yellow birches, as a place of feasting and celebration, to be held in common for as long as the blue sky arched overhead.

The Fiona completed their mountain aerie, a shining crystalline castle displaying all the colors of the sky, the sediments, and the ever-changing leaves that marked the



passing of the seasons. Bathed in sunlight and washed in the glory of the moon and stars, the dwellers of the High Castle exulted in their newfound paradise.

Numerous trods were opened between High Castle and other faerie freeholds across the land and sea. Visitors, so long as they respected the faerie's oaths of brotherhood with the nunnehi, were always welcome.

More and more Kithain petitioned to join High Castle, as their own holdings came under attack from the justifiably angry native faeries whose lands they had usurped. Because they had promised to expand their holding no farther, the Fiona began to build downward into the core of the mountain itself in order to accommodate the influx. Following a message that came in a dream, Lord Tamlin moved the balefire to the deepest recesses of the castle's interior, where its fiery Glamour spread throughout the mountain's heart.

## The Leavetaking

Then came the Shattering. There had been warnings from the other freeholds that the bulwarks erected in the Summer Lands of the new world were collapsing under the weight of humanity's growing disbelief in things magical. Their nunnehi friends, who were, themselves, preparing to undergo their own drastic rituals in the hope of surviving the impending disaster, begged the denizens of High Castle to leave, fearing that their frail faerie natures would be unable to withstand the icy winds of disbelief and reason. Passionately devoted to their new home, the Fiona insisted that they would stay until the walls of the castle crumbled around them.

The day came when a tremor swept through the land, a cataclysmic shuddering that bore no resemblance to the natural movement of rock upon rock – it was the supernatural death throes that marked the arrival of the Shattering. The turreted towers of High Castle trembled as the battering ram of Banality crashed against the castle gate. The castle walls cracked and buckled, and a rain of crystal stones showered the fortress' inner court. Many within the castle feared that they had waited too long and that High Castle's death would be their own.

Knowing that there was little time left to them in this world, Lord Tamlin wove a powerful enchantment around the remains of his crumbling castle, warding its balefire with potent protections against the approaching tide of Banality and sealing the doors of the fortress with song. With the sudden Kenning of a true bard, he bound the freehold to the Dreaming with the oath: "May you hold from without and be held from within until the silver lion returns, in need once again. May you withstand the

darkness and keep the light concealed within until that day. May time and weather serve to hide you, but may they never harm you. By moon and mist and mountain may my desires come to pass."

Lord Tamlin then ordered his household, nobles and commoners alike, to gather swiftly at the ring of oaks near the feasting ground – the faerie bald – where stood a quickly fading gateway to Arcadia. There, in the presence of their nunnehi cousins, the nobles of House Fiona bade farewell to the green forests and laurel-covered slopes which had become their adopted home. Many of the commoners chose to stay behind, casting their lot with the nunnehi, who welcomed them to stay.

One by one, the nobles of High Castle began their passage through the oaken gate. From his place behind his household, Lord Tamlin saw with horror that the fragile portal had begun to splinter. Before them the trod was fracturing, fading into beams of moonlight and silver sheets of rain. Many of the sidhe were lost, falling through and fading or stepping off the path and disappearing as the trod gave way around them. Feeling his own Glamour waning, drained by the encroaching mundanity, yet knowing that his people were doomed if he could not hold the gateway and strengthen the trod, Lord Tamlin stepped to the center of the circle and raised his fiddle. Waving his bow in salute and bidding his household farewell, Lord Tamlin, who was named in honor of a mortal knight beloved by a faerie queen but lost to her forever, began to play the threefold song, the most powerful of the bardic enchantments. From the strings of his instrument sprang forth the *geantra*", the song of joy celebrating his household's sojourn in the blessed hills of Tir-na-N'og. Next he played the mournful *goltra*", and the sadness of his lament pierced the stillness of the moonlit night, calling down the Glamour of the stars and the power of the oaks to hold open the fading gate. As he began his final tune, the *suantra*", or the song of slumber, the nunnehi, who had gathered to stand as witness to the sorrowful leavetaking, saw that the courage of the Fiona lord had doomed him to remain in the world of mortals, for the gateway had withered and crumbled. Like his namesake, Lord Tamlin would be lost to the Dreaming. Still Tamlin played, knowing that the Glamour of his music was needed to hold the trod open beyond the faded portal.

From their own secret knowledge of the ways of Glamour, the nunnehi wove their own enchantment as a last gift to the stranger who had become one with the people and the land. Shrouding the mountain bald with their own protective wards, they created an impenetrable glen, filled with Glamour, where Lord Tamlin could withstand the ravages of the bitter outside world. Before



their own magics hid him from their view, the nunnehi saw Lord Tamlin slump to the ground, fiddle cradled to his breast, overcome by his own song of sleep.

## The Years of Darkness

Until the arrival of the European settlers in the 17th and 18th centuries, the freehold and the faerie bald remained unknown to the outside world. A few of the native tribes traveled the game trails that passed nearby, but none entered the places once held by the children of the Dreaming.

The settling of the Appalachian wilderness brought European pioneers, many of them from Ireland, Scotland and England, to the fertile mountains of the Cumberland region. Small towns sprang up in the valley, and little by little, the native Americans – the Cherokee, Choctaw, and Shawnees – were forced to cede their lands to the greedy newcomers. The nunnehi shunned these mortals, who, although they dreamed fierce dreams of conquest and possession, knew little of the giving of gifts and the sharing of oaths. Retreating from the eyes

of the intruders, they sought refuge in their own hidden places, watching as the world around them suffered under the iron blade of the plow and the keen edge of the ax.

In the late 19th century, the miners came to the Cumberland, drawn by reports of rich veins of bituminous coal lying just beneath the surface. Though High Castle Mountain was spared from the ravages of their machinery until the advent of contour strip mining, it eventually fell before the onslaught of greed. Terraces were cut into the mountain's green hillside and coal was ripped from its earthy embrace. The castle within, sealed from Banality by the ancient enchantment, shuddered under the assault, but held. Parts of the outer walls were razed and untold chimerical treasures were shattered or crushed, but the balefire still burned, albeit weakly, deep within the mountain's center. Ironically, the cuttings made by the strip miners created a three-tiered profile of stark rock walls capped by verdant greenery that towers over the valleys below, looking for all the world like some ancient faerie fort set down amongst the mountains, a pale – but accurate – reminder of its former glory.

# The Breaking of the Seals

The return of the sidhe to Earth and the establishment of the Kingdom of Concordia brought about the proliferation of new freeholds throughout the North American continent. The southeastern United States – including the mountains of southern Appalachia – fell under the protection of the Kingdom of Willows. Some of the ancient faerie strongholds were rediscovered and claimed by various noble sidhe. The wording of Lord Tamlin's oath, however, kept the fortress of High Castle hidden from even the most diligent Kithain eyes until the coming of a pair of fugitive sidhe fulfilled the conditions of his swearing.

In the northern Kingdom of Apples, Lady Arienh, a flaming-haired daughter of House Fiona, whose songs rivaled the melodies of the meadowlark and the nightingale, met and fell in love with Cian'n ap Liam, a gentle knight known for his healing gifts. All would have been well but for the fact that Arienh's twin brother, Lord Dillon, objected to his sister's passion for a member of House Liam, a line considered oathbreakers by the other sidhe. When the two lovers' affections for one another became known to him, Dillon banished Cian'n from his freehold and forbade him any contact with Arienh. Rather than lose her fated love, Arienh fled south with Cian'n to the Kingdom of Willows, hoping to find a refuge somewhere within the isolated mountains.

In a rage, Lord Dillon sent his huntsmen and a pack of chimerical hounds after the fleeing pair. He, himself, swore an oath to follow Arienh to the ends of the earth, if necessary, to deal with the upstart Cian'n ap Liam as he deserved, and to restore the blemished honor of House Fiona.

Fleeing the hunt, which nightly closed in on them, the lovers chanced upon a group of three commoners, descendants of some of the original inhabitants of High Castle. The three – a pooka, a boggan and a redcap – knew vague legends of a great faerie castle which once graced the peak and reached into the depths of a nearby mountain. Looking for a place in which to pass the cold winter months, they had searched for and found what they believed to be the remnants of the structure, but had been unable to find an entrance. Hoping that they had discovered a refuge in which to hide, Arienh and Cian'n begged the three to lead them to the area.

With the sounds of the hunt ringing out behind them less than a mile away, the group reached the summit of the mountain. As Arienh stepped within the boundaries of what had once been the crystalline castle, a great rumbling shook the ground and a blaze of light sprang forth from a gray boulder, which cracked in half, revealing a shimmering doorway and a dark staircase leading down into the hill. Far below, invisible to all but faerie sight, the embers of the balefire stirred and burst once again into full potency. Nobles and commoners entered together and the door



sealed shut behind them, hiding them from those who followed. The silver lion had returned.

## The High Castle Crafters

Safe within their mountain eyrie, the five Kithain have established their own society based upon their growing friendship and mutual need. Eschewing the traditions of a nobility which despises and hunts them, Arienh and Cian'n have renounced their titles and declared themselves one in spirit with their commoner allies. Fletcher (the pooka minstrel), Lairdie (the boggan brewer), and Harley (the redcap jack-of-all-trades) have accepted the two sidhe as equals in their company. All have sworn oaths of friendship with one another. The residents of High Castle share a love of music and for making things of beauty, and their talents have enabled them to leave their stronghold on occasion and spread the Glamour of their creative abilities among the mortals who inhabit the sparsely populated county. They are also able to glean a little Glamour of their own from the artists who frequent the craft festivals and fairs.

In a region famous for its native crafters and artisans, the work of the High Castle Crafters is noted for its richness of detail and its delicate artistry. At craft fairs throughout Kentucky and the southeast, the booths operated by the motley attract the attention of connoisseurs of handmade goods. Cian'n's special brands of herbal teas and infusions have garnered a reputation for their medicinal properties, while a small coterie of trusted individuals meet secretly with Lairdie to purchase quart jars of her potent "homebrew." In addition to the work of their hands, Arienh and Fletcher also find an outlet for their musical artistry by performing old Celtic and mountain ballads for an appreciative audience of folk enthusiasts. A lower class of entertainment, enjoyed by many of the local "good old boys," is provided by Harley, who bills himself as "the man who can eat anything."

## The Phantom Fiddler

Though the true story of Lord Tamlin has been lost in the centuries since the Shattering, Native Americans and local people alike tell the story of the Phantom Fiddler. It is said that on certain nights up on the old bald near High Castle Mountain, strange and mournful music can be heard. Some say it's the devil, enticing folks to an opening into hell; others say there is nothing more than the wind in the trees which circle the bald. The High Castle motley have heard the music and more than once have set out to discover the truth behind the waves of Glamour that pour forth with

the rising of every full moon. Like all others who have tried to penetrate the secret of the oak-ringed bald, they, too, have found themselves wandering in circles, their minds befuddled by some mysterious enchantments. Recently, they have mounted a new campaign. Rather than trying to gain entry into the bald, they have taken their instruments and their finest works of art to the edge of the trees and played their most tuneful melodies beneath the light of the rising moon. Although their gifts remain untouched and their songs dissipate upon the breezes of the night, both Arienh and Fletcher have sworn that they hear, from deep within the bald, the dulcet sounds of a mournful fiddle echoing their refrains. Furthermore, Cian'n has begun to dream of a crystalline castle rising above the hill....

## External Relations The Kingdom of Willows

The High Castle Crafters have no official ties with the Kingdom of Willows. Fearing that the knowledge of their whereabouts will reach Dillon's ears, Arienh and Cian'n have neglected to notify any of the Seelie rulers of their appropriation of High Castle. In addition, the motley opposes the imposition of the laws of the noble sidhe upon a changeling culture (the nunnehi) that has survived for centuries without foreign interference. The rebellious, independent spirit of the mountains has taken root and flourished within the hearts of the High Castle motley.

## The Nunnehi

Since their reclamation of High Castle, the five Kithain have been visited by emissaries from the local nunnehi, many of whom still remember the ancient agreements sworn by the freehold's original lord. Eager to safeguard their new home, the High Castle Crafters readily agreed to renew those pledges of friendship and mutual defense, despite the fact that their alliance with these native Kithain has put them at odds with the policies of the Kingdom of Willows. Because the dwellers of the High Castle honor the ancient customs and laws of the nunnehi, they are safe from the harassment experienced by other freeholds who refuse to acknowledge the claims of native nunnehi.

## Other Kithain

Quietly, word has spread among Kithain of the region who are dispossessed, who feel slighted by the sidhe-dominated societies in which they live, or who simply want to

travel, that the High Castle Crafters welcome those who mean them no harm. Fae attracted to the Glamour in Cian'n's herbal concoctions or Arienh's jewelry may be invited back to the stronghold after being sworn to secrecy about it. Thus, though the old fortress seems isolated, many visitors find their way to it and stay for a day or a week. Most of them bring news of court and other freeholds.

## Garou

The southeastern mountains are home to a number of Garou, but the ranks of these warriors of Gaia are too thinly spread to cover the vast amount of territory which comprises the Appalachian wilderness. So far, only one Garou has sought to make contact with this group of Kithain and has received their invitation to visit them in their freehold. Anubis Hillwalker, a Silent Strider who wanders the mountains as a circuit rider and traveling "preacher" of his own natural world religion, has broadened his route to include a brief stopover at High Castle every month or so.

## Mages

The wilderness of eastern Kentucky contains many places where wyld magic has collected, and a few mages have come to the area in search of rumored stores of Tass. They have been thwarted, for the most part, by the local nunnehi, who have occasionally requested aid from the High Castle Crafters in protecting their lands from those who would drain it of its remaining magic. A few mages, however, have succeeded in winning the trust of both the Kithain of High Castle and the nunnehi who dwell nearby. Among these is a Dreamspeaker named Tayanita, a mixed-blood Cherokee who first encountered the motley at a craft show, where she sensed true magic in Cian'n's herbal concoctions.

## Wraiths

The restless spirits of a few strip miners killed while stripping the landscape in search of coal still have occasion to visit the site of their death. While the High Castle Crafters have no knowledge of the politics of the Underworld, the presence of these unhappy wraiths occasionally impinges upon their faerie sight and there has been some discussion among members of the motley as to whether or not anything can be done to bring peace to these unfortunate souls. There are also rumors of an ancient Cherokee burial ground located somewhere near High Castle Mountain, but the nunnehi have requested that their Kithain friends avoid this sacred place.

## Mortals

Their work as crafters and musicians has involved the High Castle motley with a number of mortals. The High Castle Crafters maintain a post office box in nearby London, Kentucky, where they receive orders for crafted items as well as notices and invitations to craft shows. Although their relations with the mortal world are somewhat restricted by their fear of discovery, the members of the motley have managed to make a few friends among other local crafters and musicians. Because of Harley's insatiable appetite for action films, they regularly attend opening night at various London movie theaters. Lairdie's connections with other local "brewers" serve to keep the group informed of any suspicious strangers asking questions about them.

## The High Castle Crafters

Even though they disregard the Seelie court which rules the Kingdom of Willows, the Crafters consider themselves to be Seelie. These Appalachian Kithain prefer musing to Ravaging, and often provide their own Glamour through craft and song.

### Arienh (A-reen) "The Nightingale"

A rarity among Kithain, the Baroness Arienh and her brother, Dillon, are twins – both as fae and in their mortal seemings. As the elder, by all of twelve minutes, Dillon rules the freehold of Lion's Guard in the Kingdom of Apples, where both he and his sister lived after the death of their mortal parents.

A gifted singer and musician, Arienh spent much of her time studying bardic lore, acquiring a broad repertoire of folk ballads and courtly lays. She brought the legendary Fiona passion to her music, and her performances were the highlight of many a freehold celebration. Her delicate fingers, which could pluck sweet tunes from a lap harp, also enabled her to craft exquisite jewelry. Although many nobles throughout the Kingdom of Apples paid court to the fiery-haired maiden, Arienh reserved her emotions for her music and crafting, turning aside all suitors with a gentle smile. The coming of Cian'n ap Liam changed all that. His gentle manner and soft-spoken words won her heart, and the two swore a secret oath of eternal love.

Arienh is saddened that she had to choose between her brother and her sworn love, but has found happiness in High Castle. Having thrown off the constraints placed upon her as a noble, she revels in the freedom to dance through the hallways,



sing when she feels like it and indulge her love of crafting. Best of all, she has learned that she can make a living with her singing and her jewelry-making. She is independent, bound only by the oaths she chose to swear, not by her brother's (or anyone else's) ideas of propriety. She hopes to someday turn High Castle into a great hall, welcoming any Kithain who fit in well with the motley and who respect the nunnehi. Though she has thrown off her noble status, Arienh's grace, passion and charisma make her the group's natural leader and spokesperson.

**Court:** Seelie

**Legacies:** Crafter/Peacock

**House:** Fiona

**Seeming:** Wilder

**Kith:** Sidhe

**Physical:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

**Social:** Charisma 4, Manipulation 2, Appearance 5

**Mental:** Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

**Talents:** Alertness 2, Athletics 1, Dodge 1, Empathy 3, Kenning 2, Leadership 3, Subterfuge 1

**Skills:** Animal Ken 1, Crafts (jewelry) 4, Etiquette 3, Melee 1, Performance (music) 4

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 1, Linguistics 2, Mythlore 2, Politics 1

**Arts:** Sovereign 3, Wayfare 1

**Realms:** Actor 2, Fae 3, Props 2

**Backgrounds:** Dreamers 2, Greymyre 1, Holdings 1, Resources 1, Title (renounced) 3

**Glamour:** 6

**Willpower:** 5

**Banality:** 3

**Image:** Arienh displays the classic features of House Fiona: flaming red hair, delicate features, and deep-green eyes. The outward fragility of her appearance belies an inner strength born from the fiery passion that rules her. Within the freehold of High Castle, Arienh sometimes adorns herself with fine clothing and jewelry (some of which she crafts herself). When traveling the craft fair circuit, she prefers long, split skirts and peasant blouses, and braids her waist-length hair. Even when sitting still, she is always in motion, either working on some piece of jewelry, plucking the strings of her lap harp, or just tapping her feet in time to a tune that only she can hear.

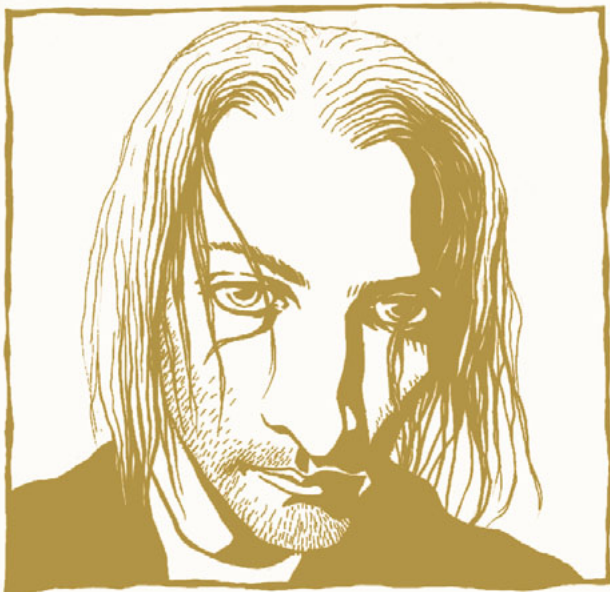
**Roleplaying Hints:** To be with your sworn love, you have abandoned hearth and home and turned your back on a brother who was closer to you than your own heartbeat. Your affection for your brother is second only to your overwhelming love for Cian'n. Passion dictates everything you do, from your music to your craft. You are outgoing, talkative, active and a natural leader. Your gaiety is as genuine and as explosive as your overwhelming sorrow. Never do anything by halves. Live, love, laugh and cry as if each moment were your last.

## Cian'n (KEEnahn) "The Healer"

Born to the House of Liam, considered oathbreakers by their faerie kin, Cian'n wanted nothing more than to be an honorable knight and a healer. His Saining took place at Dillon's court in the freehold of Lion's Guard. He was fifteen. Cian'n remembers nothing of his former mortal life. Though he tried always to be a courteous and fair-spoken knight, his patience was often tried by those who discriminated against him for his affiliation with House Liam. In fact, he often found himself challenging those who spoke badly of his house. Rather than endure these constant disparagements, Cian'n took upon himself a geasa to always speak and act in defense of his house, just as Liam defended mortals from the Kithain who would have harmed them.

The quiet, gentle young knight was allowed a grudging place at Dillon's court. Dillon's twin sister Arienh, however, gave him much more. They became fast friends, then before either of them knew what was happening, they realized that they were in love, and pledged their undying devotion to one another.

In the wake of his banishment and flight, and because he and Arienh have sworn oaths of friendship to three Kithain commoners, he also has renounced his title. Cian'n regrets that he will never be acknowledged a true knight, but he has turned most of his attention to concocting healing tinctures, which he sells at craft fairs.



Recently, Cian'n has begun taking classes at a local college preparatory, studying medicine. He eventually hopes to be able to combine his medical studies with his Glamour so that he can bring healing to those who could not otherwise be helped. Because he is primarily a healer and has a gentle manner, many people tend to overlook or discount Cian'n, especially when Arienh (the extrovert) is around. He isn't flashy, but his wisdom and stability provide the foundation upon which rests the success of the freehold. His good sense and genuine caring for everyone in the motley makes him the heart of the group. When any of them have problems or worries, they come to Cian'n. He too hopes that High Castle can provide refuge for those who need it. Those who dismiss him for a weakling have never seen him take up arms in defense of his friends or his ideals.

**Court:** Seelie

**Legacies:** Saint/Wretch

**House:** Liam

**Seeming:** Wilder

**Kith:** Sidhe

**Physical:** Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

**Social:** Charisma 3, Manipulation 1, Appearance 5

**Mental:** Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

**Talents:** Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 3, Empathy 3, Kenning 3, Leadership 1

**Skills:** Crafts 3, Drive 1, Etiquette 2, Melee (sword) 4

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 1, Herbalism (healing tinctures) 4, Medicine 3, Mythlore 2

**Arts:** Primal 3, Sovereign 1

**Realms:** Actor 3, Fae 3, Scene 1

**Backgrounds:** Chimera (sword) 2, Gremayre 1, Title (renounced) 2

**Glamour:** 6

**Willpower:** 6

**Banalities:** 4

**Image:** In his mortal guise, Cian'n is a moderately tall, slender young man with shoulder-length blond hair and deep blue eyes. His face, though delicate, is not effeminate, and his eyes always seem sad. He wears jeans and boots, but tops them with cotton tunics. In his faerie seeming, he looks much the same, but his hair takes on a golden sheen, his eyes deepen to a violet blue and his ears become slightly pointed. Should anyone denigrate House Liam, he takes on the aspect of a wrathful faerie lord.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You are soft-spoken and kind, but you aren't a pushover. You are completely devoted to Arienh and would give your life for her were she in danger. You often wonder how it is that you deserve her love. You are compassionate and cannot bear to see anyone in pain without trying to do something to ease it. Be kind and speak courteously to all. You are a knight (whatever anyone else thinks) and a healer. Help those in need and protect the innocent and the weak. Defend the honor of your house and never betray your lady or your friends.

## Fletcher "The Clown"

Fletcher was born into a family of musicians and instrument makers who lived in the mountains of eastern Kentucky. Fletcher and his brothers spent their childhoods learning how to live up to their reputations as wild mountain boys. Fletcher, in particular, seemed to have a knack for "inventing" excuses for why he seldom attended school, and his glib tongue served to extricate him from many tricky situations. All of it came to a head the day he "borrowed" old Hattie Bainbridge's laundry. She called the sheriff. Rather than face time in juvenile hall, Fletcher took off for the city.

He had only just made it to a safe haven when his Chrysalis came upon him. A city pooka, a cat chimera named Spif, found him as he entered his Chrysalis and helped guide him through it. Afterward, he and Spif hung out together for a few weeks while Spif explained things to him (an interesting proposition since neither of them could tell the complete truth). Fletcher was elated to know that he was something special. Now that he could make it on his own, however, he realized that he just didn't fit in well in the city. He returned to the Kentucky mountains, where his other form, a white-tailed deer, would not be so conspicuous (forgetting all about deer season).

When the first rifle shot caught him in the shoulder, he panicked and ran as far and as fast as he could. In his



flight, he literally stumbled across Harley and Lairdie where they had set up a squatter's camp. They took him in and hid him from his pursuers. It was not long before the three swore an oath of friendship.

Talking with some of the Native Americans in the area, the three learned of an old legend about High Castle Mountain. Though they found the ruins of the faerie castle atop it, they were unable to enter until they met Arienh and Cian'n. The two sidhe found a sympathetic friend in Fletcher, who remembered his own panicked flight and whose musical abilities complimented those of Arienh. Fletcher loves living at High Castle and making the rounds of the craft fairs. He hopes that in the near future he and Arienh can make a tape of their music to sell at the fairs. It would sure attract customers to his instrument-making booth!

**Court:** Seelie

**Legacies:** Troubadour/Fool

**Seeming:** Wilder

**Kith:** Pooka

**Physical:** Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

**Social:** Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

**Talents:** Alertness 1, Athletics 2, Dodge 2, Empathy 1, Kenning 2, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 2

**Skills:** Animal Ken 1, Crafts (musical instrument making) 4, Performance (music) 3, Security 1, Stealth 2

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 1, Investigation 1, Mythlore 1, Occult 2

**Arts:** Chicanery 2, Legerdemain 2

**Realms:** Fae 3, Nature 2, Scene 2

**Backgrounds:** Chimera (cat) 2, Dreamers 1, Gremayre 2, Resources 1

**Glamour:** 6

**Willpower:** 5

**Banality:** 3

**Image:** In his mortal guise, Fletcher is a tall, gangly youth with sandy-brown hair that is already thinning. His large brown eyes and his expression of perpetual surprise give him the appearance of a deer caught in the headlights of an oncoming car. In his faerie seeming, his eyes grow even larger and softer, and the beginnings of a rack of antlers sprout from his head. (Only a few select people have seen the tufted scut which marks his affinity with the white-tailed deer.) He dresses for comfort in jeans, open vest and flannel shirts or T-shirts, and makes no distinction between "work" clothes and performing duds. Fletcher's speaking voice resounds with warmth and persuasion. As a singer, his clear, versatile tenor projects both humor and sadness with equal fervor and provides a perfect counterpoint for Arienh's crystal soprano tones.

**Roleplaying Hints:** Too many people take too many things too seriously. It's your job, and provides a good bit of entertainment, to persuade them differently. Life is fun! People should enjoy themselves. Of course there are a few serious things, like true love. You wouldn't mind having a relationship like Arienh and Cian'n have, but it'll come some day. And the right person will definitely have a sense of humor! Have a good time. Make someone laugh. Don't bother yourself with facts, just make things up to suit yourself.

## Lairdie "Miz Moonshine"

Lairdie learned to make moonshine at her grandpappy's knee. She was married off to the second Cordwell boy at the age of thirteen, and having a skill like that meant the difference between starving and making a go of things. She always took pride in her house – never mind that it was just an old junked trailer – and kept it as well as she could while her husband Del was off working in the mine. She had two children, Clement and Trisha, and raised them in between starting her own pottery business.

Del was killed in a mining accident when the children were not yet teenagers and Lairdie found out just what a common law wife was entitled to according to the company: nothing.

She made do with what she had and pooled her resources with other “brewers” in the mountains. Then the law came and broke up her still. Social services took her kids away and placed them with “respectable” families and Lairdie lost her trailer to the legal fees when she tried to recover her kids. Left with nothing, unable to locate her missing children, Lairdie set up a squatter’s camp in the mountains, far away from any town.

There she built another still and brooded until one day an ugly young man named Harley found her and asked her for something to eat. His Glamour triggered her Chrysalis and Lairdie discovered her Kithain nature – as a grump. Harley stayed with her (mostly, so he said, because the food was good and the moonshine was great), and before long Lairdie came to look upon him as a son (albeit a somewhat grotesque one at times). Then Fletcher arrived on the scene, fleeing from hunters who thought the pooka was really a white-tailed deer. She dissuaded Harley from eating him (“Yum, venison!”) and took him in as well.

Knowing they couldn’t stay in her encampment through the winter, the three sought out High Castle and entered it along with Cian’n and Arienh. They have lived together ever since, with Lairdie ruling the roost as unofficial mother hen and chief housekeeper.

Although she sells her pots at craft fairs, her moonshine is acknowledged to be some of the smoothest brew in the state (and is her real source of income). Lairdie is content to make her brew, watch over the wilder young’uns and live out her remaining years at the freehold.

**Court:** Seelie

**Legacies:** Bumpkin/Scrooge



**Seeming:** Grump

**Kith:** Boggan

**Physical:** Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

**Social:** Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

**Mental:** Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

**Talents:** Alertness 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 1, Empathy 2, Intimidation 1, Kenning 2, Streetwise 2

**Skills:** Animal Ken 1, Brewing (moonshine) 5, Crafts (pottery) 3, Drive 1, Melee 1, Security 2, Stealth 2

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 1, Investigation 1, Law 1, Mythlore 1, Politics 1

**Arts:** Soothsay 2, Wayfare 2

**Realms:** Actor 3, Fae 3, Props 2

**Backgrounds:** Contacts 3, Gremayre 1, Resources 1

**Glamour:** 5

**Willpower:** 8

**Banality:** 5

**Image:** As a mortal, Lairdie typifies what most people think of as a “mountain woman.” Her face is lined with the cares of her early life and the constant worry for the well-being of her missing children. She is a short, stocky woman with a large nose and small eyes. She keeps her dark brown hair cut sensibly short, and usually dresses in loose-fitting clothes – either a cotton print dress or overalls and a man’s shirt. As a boggan, her features are somewhat exaggerated, emphasizing her large, heavily callused hands. When she is not brewing or throwing pots, she has some kind of cleaning rag or cooking utensil in her hand. Though no one has ever actually seen her work, the evidence of her constant activity can be found throughout the freehold.

**Roleplaying Hints:** These young’uns need a mama, and you’ve been elected. It’s not hard enough keeping up with a bottomless stomach and a skittery, smooth-voiced liar; now you have a pair of lovebirds moping around each other and always getting underfoot. Not a one of ðem has a lick of sense, and sometimes you feel that the only sensible person within spitting distance is you. You’ve told them more than once that they’re more trouble than they’re worth, but deep down, you know that if you didn’t have them to worry about, you’d just sit and brood about your kids. You’re the grouch with the heart of gold. Your companions are your life, and you’d do just about anything to protect them. Complain constantly, but always be there when they need you. Save your money. Someday, you’re gonna hire the fanciest lawyer there is and get your children back – never mind that they’re probably grown by now.

## Harley "Iron Jaw"

Harley's parents were bikers. Before he was six, he had traveled through five southern states and was helping strip down bikes and rebuild them for more speed. Of course, some of the riders complained that after Harley helped, certain parts turned up missing. Harley was a weird kid. He could ride a motorcycle by the time he was ten and made metal sculptures, from the missing parts, that he sold at race meets. Then his parents divorced. Messily. For awhile, Harley was jerked between the two of them as each sought to foist him off on the other.

Knowing that neither parent really wanted him, Harley stole his father's best bike and left. He scraped out a living by selling his sculptures, but was finally reduced to life on the street. He had no food and he refused to sell the bike (knowing he'd get only a few dollars for it without ownership papers). Picking up a partially empty tin can in an alleyway one day, he started to scrape out the leftover food when his Chrysalis hit him. When he came out of it, he knew two things: he was a redcap, and the can tasted just as good as the leftovers inside it. He'd never starve again.

Even though he soon met other Kithain, he didn't feel completely comfortable in the city, because nobody trusted a redcap. When he saw the poster of himself with the "Reward for Information" sign on it, he took it as an omen that it was time to leave. He went to the mountains. Unfortunately, he forgot that there weren't too many trash dumpsters in the hills of eastern Kentucky.

Just as he was getting desperate enough to consider eating his bike, he ran across Lairdie, who fed him and plied him with moonshine. His presence triggered Lair-

die's own Chrysalis, and Harley stayed with her through her transformation into the boggan she had always been. Unlike the other Kithain he'd met, Lairdie seemed to care what happened to him. He stayed. Then Fletcher, the pooka, showed up and the three of them moved into High Castle with Cian-n and Arienh.

Harley is content for weeks at a time with riding along the mountain roads and making his sculptures, but then he'll get the urge to wander. He sometimes takes off and rides cross-country with various motorcycle gangs or disappears for weeks, searching out other freeholds or participating in "grand gross-outs" with other redcaps. He returned from one such venture bearing the grand prize for some contest he refused to disclose – a silver ax, a real faerie treasure. Wherever he goes, and no matter how long he stays away, though, Harley always returns to Lairdie and his oathmates.

**Court:** Seelie

**Legacies:** Wayfarer/Grotesque

**Seeming:** Wilder

**Kith:** Redcap

**Physical:** Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

**Social:** Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 1

**Mental:** Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

**Talents:** Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 2, Intimidation 2, Kenning 1, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 1

**Skills:** Crafts (metalworking) 4, Drive (motorcycle) 4, Firearms 1, Melee 2, Stealth 1

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 1, Linguistics 1, Mythlore 1, Politics 1, Science 1

**Arts:** Legerdemain 3, Primal 1

**Realms:** Actor 3, Fae 3, Nature 2, Props 1

**Backgrounds:** Contacts 2, Greymare 1, Resources 1, Treasure (silver ax) 3


**Glamour:** 5

**Willpower:** 7

**Banality:** 4

**Image:** Despite his bandy legs (permanently bowed from spending much of his life straddling a motorcycle), Harley projects an image of compact muscularity. Both his arms and his back are covered with tattoos – everything from snakes to skulls to roses to fire-breathing dragons. His lank, black hair is usually greased back and secured with a leather thong. He wears a gold hoop in one ear, and his wide mouth seems to contain far too many teeth. As a redcap, his skin is gray and mottled (where it shows) and his teeth are strong and sharp. He dresses in jeans, knee-high boots, and a sweat-stained leather vest. He had a motorcycle helmet once, but hunger won hands down over legalities... he ate it!





**Roleplaying Hints:** You've never had much stability in your life, but now, all of a sudden, you have a home and a family. Never mind that the home is really a castle built of dreams in the middle of a strip-mined rock and that none of your "family" is related to you. Even though you've all sworn oaths to each other, you can't shake the feeling that sooner or later one or the other of your oath-mates will cotton to the fact that you're a redcap and will decide to heave you out of the freehold. You spend a lot of time trying to shock them with some gross behavior, just to see how much of you they can take. So far, you haven't found their limit – though Arienh did throw up once, and Lairdie made you clean it up.... Even though you care about all of them, you occasionally get the itch to travel. Here, there, doesn't matter where. You just have to go. You always come back, though. This here's home.

## Lord Tamlin, "The Phantom Fiddler"

Although Lord Tamlin appears as a central figure in the story of High Castle freehold, he is not detailed here. Lord Tamlin is an ancient faerie with the powers and knowledge of a true bard, but he is also trapped within the faerie glen where he played the tunes that held the gate while his household escaped to Arcadia. Were he to leave the glen or were it to be breached, he would likely die within minutes. Being true fae, he has no resistance to the force of Banality.

If he appears in a story, the Storyteller should feel free to create any stats she feels are necessary to adequately portray his grandeur, integrity and power. He is honorable, heroic, and utterly lonely within his circumscribed glen. Treat him kindly.

## Story Ideas

The following ideas are intended to provide Storytellers with a variety of ways in which to involve their players with the Kithain of High Castle.

- Although Lord Dillon's efforts to find his sister were thwarted by the magics surrounding High Castle, he has

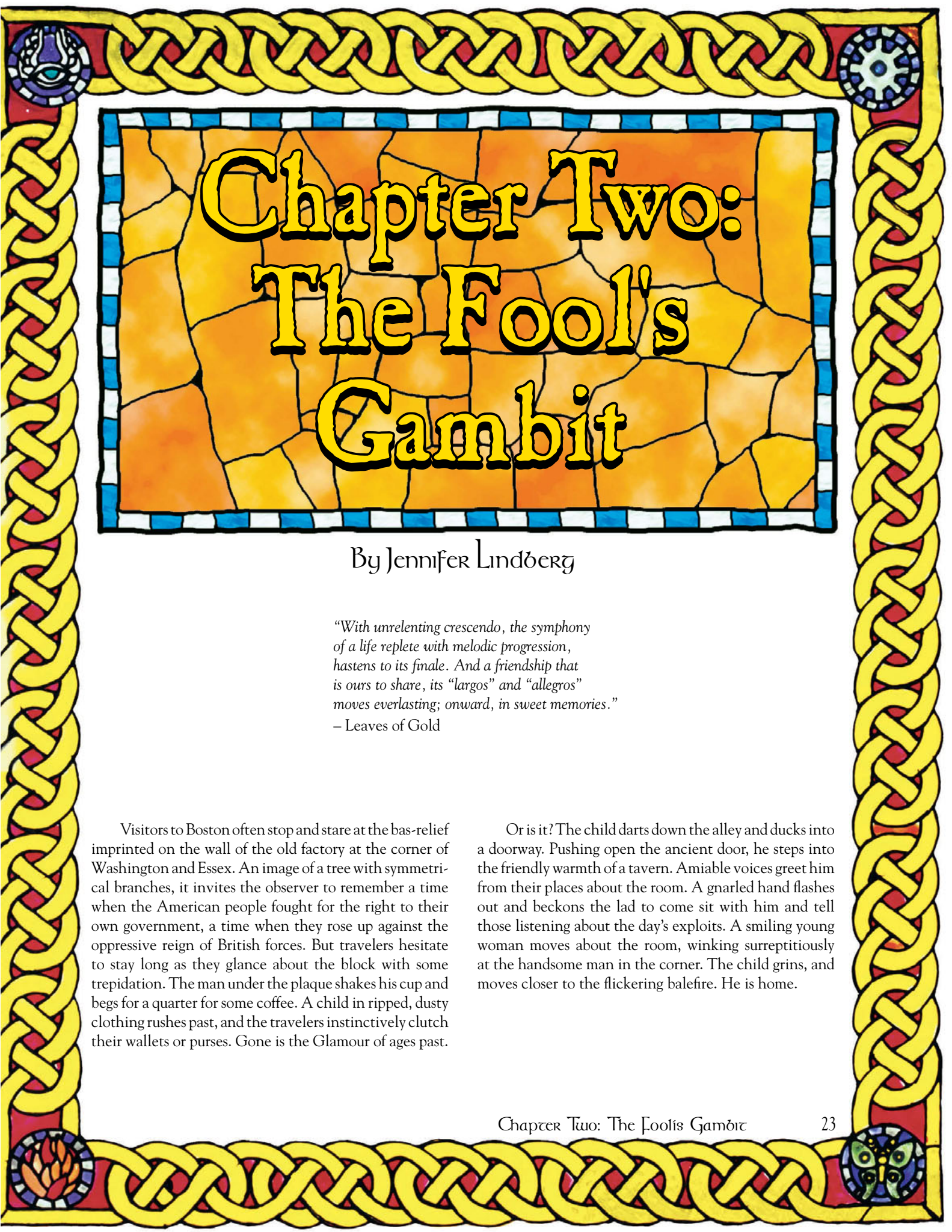
not given up. When he can spare the time from his duties as ruler of his freehold in the Kingdom of Apples, Dillon patrols the Cumberland Mountains, obsessed with keeping his oath. So far, only luck, and his intrinsic disdain for the lesser Arts of the common folk, have prevented him from tracing Arienh or Cian'n through the work of the High Castle Crafters. Occasionally, he has been known to enlist the aid of Kithain sympathetic to his plight. He always portrays his sister as the victim of a brutal kidnapping by an Unseelie renegade. The characters could be charged by Lord Dillon to assist him in his search. Alternately, as friends of the High Castle motley, they could stumble upon Dillon and his knights and either lead them astray or attempt to arrange a reconciliation between brother and sister.

- The characters may themselves be fleeing from pursuers, either a group of Dauntain or some other threat. Losing themselves in the mountains of Kentucky, they may be discovered and offered sanctuary by the High Castle motley, or (if a member of House Fiona is among them) the doorway to the underground eyrie may swing open of its own accord. If this happens at a time when the residents of the fortress are away at one of the local craft fairs, the characters may think they have discovered an abandoned freehold, and seek to lay claim to it. Warfare or cooperation may ensue.

- The legend of the Phantom Fiddler has spread throughout the Kingdom of Willows. The characters have need of ancient faerie magic. Nothing else will solve their current problem, or perhaps they are just curious. Either way, having heard the tale of a mountain bald where a mysterious figure, thought to be one of the few true fae left in the world, appears on nights of the full moon, the characters set out to locate this legendary creature and voice their petition. After fruitless attempts to penetrate the bald, the characters hear of a group of local Kithain believed to be able to communicate with the Phantom Fiddler. Winning the trust of the High Castle motley and helping them discover how to effectively contact Lord Tamlin could involve a host of tests and challenges, as well as a series of delicate negotiations with the nunnehi whose charms still ward the glen.



Steve  
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# Chapter Two: The Fool's Gambit

By Jennifer Lindberg

*"With unrelenting crescendo, the symphony  
of a life replete with melodic progression,  
hastens to its finale. And a friendship that  
is ours to share, its "largos" and "allegros"  
moves everlasting; onward, in sweet memories."*

– Leaves of Gold

Visitors to Boston often stop and stare at the bas-relief imprinted on the wall of the old factory at the corner of Washington and Essex. An image of a tree with symmetrical branches, it invites the observer to remember a time when the American people fought for the right to their own government, a time when they rose up against the oppressive reign of British forces. But travelers hesitate to stay long as they glance about the block with some trepidation. The man under the plaque shakes his cup and begs for a quarter for some coffee. A child in ripped, dusty clothing rushes past, and the travelers instinctively clutch their wallets or purses. Gone is the Glamour of ages past.

Or is it? The child darts down the alley and ducks into a doorway. Pushing open the ancient door, he steps into the friendly warmth of a tavern. Amiable voices greet him from their places about the room. A gnarled hand flashes out and beckons the lad to come sit with him and tell those listening about the day's exploits. A smiling young woman moves about the room, winking surreptitiously at the handsome man in the corner. The child grins, and moves closer to the flickering balefire. He is home.



## The Fool's Gambit

Only a few blocks from Boston Commons is a section of the city that Bostonians have dubbed "the Combat Zone." Here, the buildings stand in various states of disrepair, like broken toys left by a careless child. Car fumes, cigarette smoke and the scent of unwashed bodies mingle together against the bleak backdrop of the rumble of the train. Homeless people wander the street, shaking their cans or cups, asking for a small donation to their latest meal, while pickpocket grifters work the crowds.

To outsiders, this building is just another casualty of time and progress. It appears to be an old factory, but no one remembers when it was erected, or what was produced within its brick walls. The only feature that distinguishes it from any of the other buildings in the area is the marble bas-relief of a tree, two stories up on the wall of the building that faces the street. The tree's symmetrical branches hang over the very spot where the Liberty Tree was reputed to have stood nearly two centuries ago – a tribute to a monument of American history.

Within its walls, however, Glamour runs free and rampant. There is a decrepit door on the side of the building which has a remarkably new handle; this is actually the entrance to the tavern known to the Kithain as The Fool's Gambit, a gathering place reminiscent of the commonplace taverns of the early 1800s. Within its walls, all Kithain are welcome – whether Seelie or Unseelie, noble or commoner – as long as they follow the rules of the establishment. Here they enjoy the warmth of the tavern's fellowship and find escape from the world's Banality.

There are two centers of focus in this tavern. The first is the huge hearth that takes up half the back wall of the room. An intricate pattern is woven into the stone of the granite framework, resembling a Celtic knot with a light blue crystal as its center. It was created over a century ago by a grump nocker, and if one traced the entire pattern, one would find that it was formed entirely with a single unbroken line. Huge iron bars reach up, embracing the logs that produce this tavern's balefire. It burns brightly, sparkling with different colors; according to rumor, the balefire has never dimmed since the tavern was opened, except on one occasion during the Accordance Wars. The keystone to the hearth bears the inscription *Caed Mille Failte* (one hundred thousand welcomes), dated 1834.

Over the fireplace is a large mantle made of stone, and travelers will find a wide variety of treasurers sprawled across its width. A scroll bearing the signatures of all the

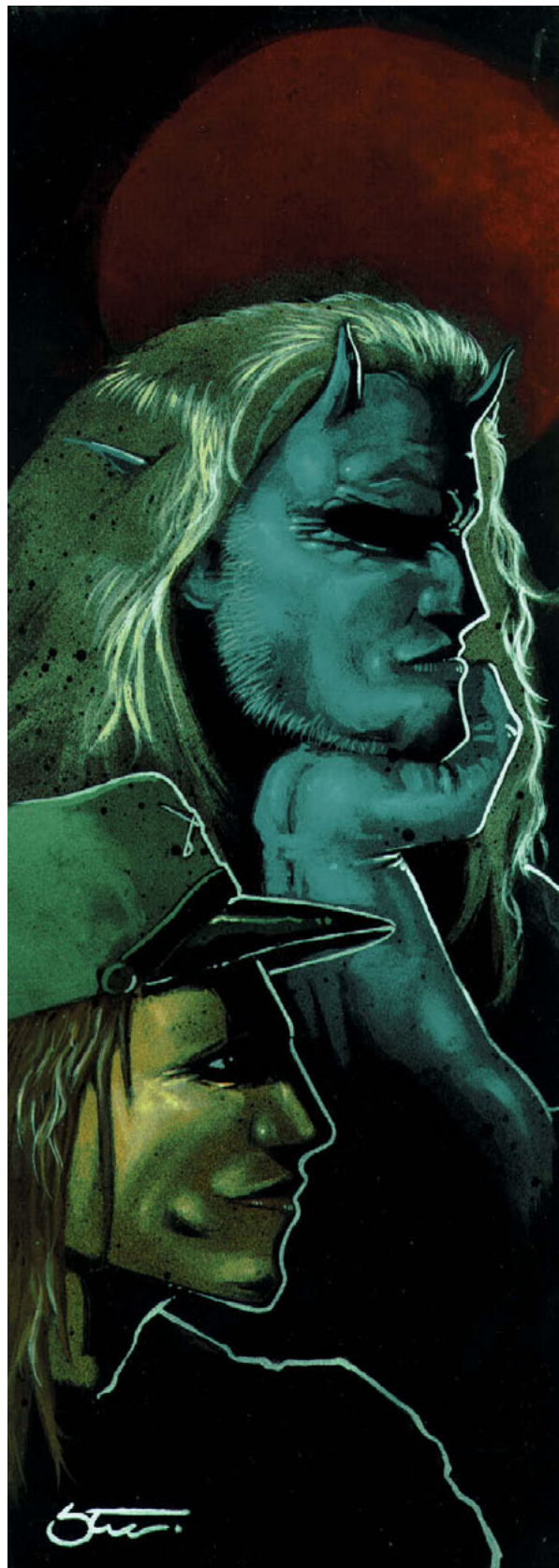
winners of the Riddle Contest lies next to a first edition copy of *Through the Looking Glass* by Lewis Carroll. In the center, a green dragon wraps its ceramic body lovingly around her treasure while pondering the mysteries of an opal within her claw. Beside it is a pewter hand, which holds a thin silver chain; its clear, tear-drop crystal pendant sparkles in the firelight, casting a myriad of rainbows about the room. If asked, patrons will swear that the crystal holds within it the memories of thousands of people. They would then direct you to John, and tell you to go ask him the story of the necklace of memory. A simple leather bag sits on the end of the mantle; its contents are a mystery.

Next to the hearth is a large hickory chest, which contains a variety of relics of the past. The owner also stores in it various items of amusement, including wood carving tools, multi-colored slinkys, a translucent marble or two, and a well-stocked dice bag. A worn mahogany box holds the wooden chess figures and checkers for the table in the corner, while a leather-coated box contains hand-painted Mah Jong tiles.

The second focus of the tavern is the large circular table in the center of the room. This is the actual stump of the original Liberty Tree. Within the freehold, the tree stump sparkles with Glamour and appears to be a smoothly finished table rising out of the floor. The Liberty Tree is said to at times call new Kithain to it, awakening their souls upon their arrival. To the tavern patrons, it is the symbol of the freehold.

Hung along the walls are tapestries reputed to have been spun from clouds, moonbeams and pure Glamour. They depict various scenes from throughout history, including an image of the original Liberty Tree, and an illustration of the battle that occurred in Boston during the Accordance Wars. If you watch the tapestries closely, the Glamour interwoven with the threads seem to bring the images to life. Horses move, guns smoke and the leaves on the tree seems to rustle in an unseen breeze. Often patrons can amuse themselves by watching the Accordance War replayed on the large central tapestry. Many even make claim to seeing Margaret's husband die at the hand of the duke's men.

A large oak bar takes up the wall on the right, and it is here that the drinks are mixed and served. Three chairs are set aside for a group of eshu who make a yearly journey to trade stories with the regulars of the tavern. An old grump nocker can always be seen in his rocking chair by the fire, carving something out of wood, and no matter what time of day, or what day of the week, a story or song can always be heard from one of the tavern's patrons.





## History

*"We'll rally from the hillside, we'll gather from the plain, shouting the battle cry of freedom."*

– Traditional

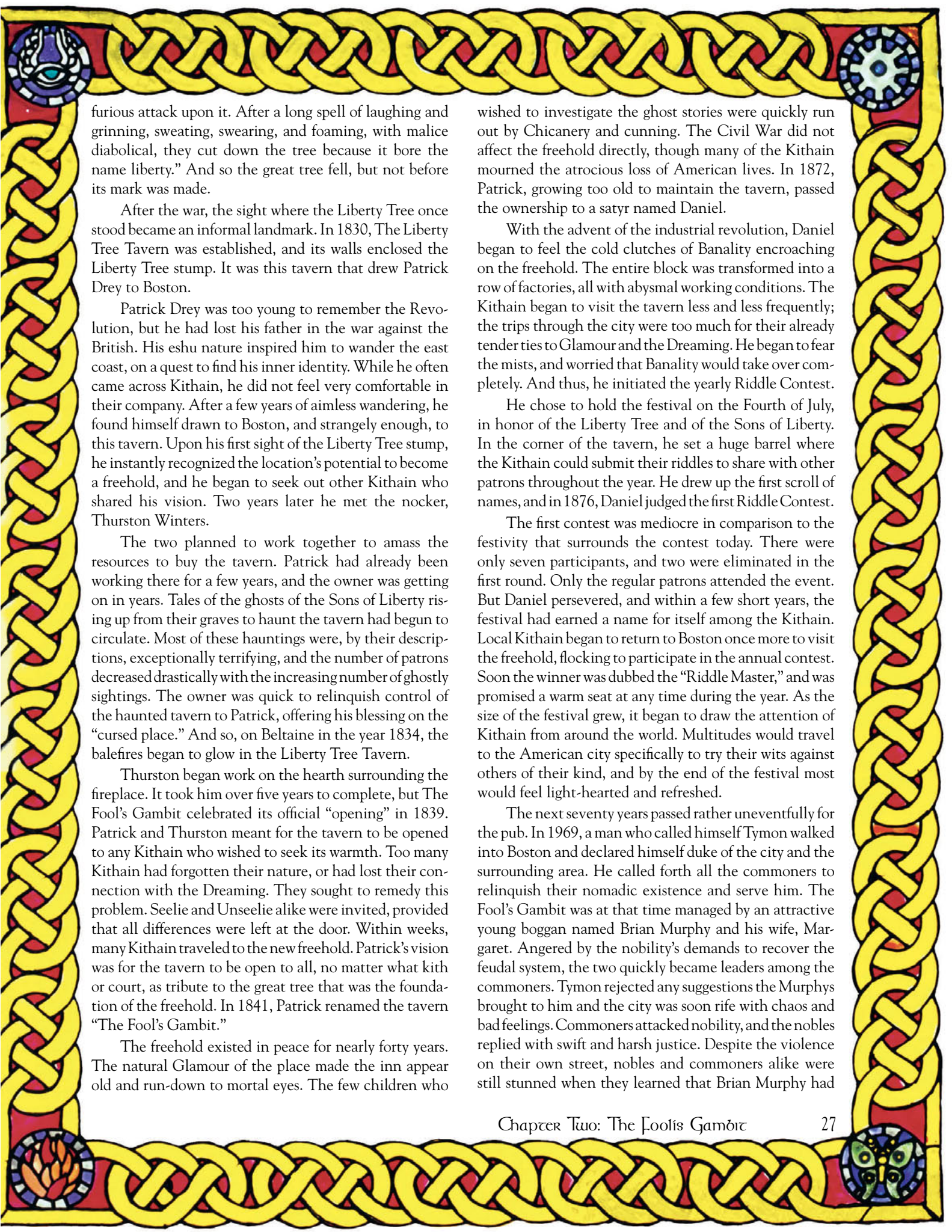
In 1765, a large elm tree stood on the corner of Washington and Essex street, known at the time as Hanover Square. Underneath its sprawling branches, the leaders of the Revolution met and discussed politics, current affairs, and, of course, war. In 1765, Colonel Barre issued a speech to the English Parliament, calling these rebellious colonists the "Sons of Liberty."

It was from the sprawling branches of this tree that the Sons of Liberty hung an effigy of Andrew Oliver, the stamp master, on August 14, 1765. It was a likeness of Oliver, with a devil's head, peering out from under a boot, which was to represent Lord Brute, the prime Minister who signed the Stamp Act. Lt. Governor Hutchinson ordered the militia to remove the effigy, but it drew such large crowds that the militia feared to rouse the anger of the mob and refused the command. The Sons of Liberty took the effigy down that night at sunset and marched it, funeral-procession style, through town, to the Town House where the government was discussing the affair, and finally to Fort Hill, where they burned it in full view of Oliver's house.

After this event, the tree became a sacred symbol of freedom for the colonists, and the Sons of Liberty determined to look after it, and treat it with respect and reverence. Early in 1766, the Sons of Liberty affixed a plaque on the tree which read, "This tree was planted in the year of 1646, and was pruned by the orders of the Sons of Liberty, Feb. 14 1766." On the eve of the renunciation of the Stamp Act in May of 1766, the Liberty Tree was draped with banners, streamers and lanterns. It was one of the most joyous occasions the town had experienced in a very long time.

The next major event occurred in connection with the hated tea tax. In mid-December of 1773, the Sons of Liberty summoned the consignees of the tea to the Liberty Tree to explain publicly why they could not refuse the tea and return it to England. With the failure of the consignees to appear, the Sons of Liberty led a mob to riot near the Town House. All of this occurred within days of the Boston Tea Party.

It was inevitable that the Redcoats and the Tories would desire to wreak vengeance upon this symbol that seemed to be a focus of so much havoc in the city. And thus, one August day in 1775, they marched on Hanover Square, intent upon destroying the tree. The next day, the Essex Gazette reported: "Armed with axes, they made a



furious attack upon it. After a long spell of laughing and grinning, sweating, swearing, and foaming, with malice diabolical, they cut down the tree because it bore the name liberty." And so the great tree fell, but not before its mark was made.

After the war, the sight where the Liberty Tree once stood became an informal landmark. In 1830, The Liberty Tree Tavern was established, and its walls enclosed the Liberty Tree stump. It was this tavern that drew Patrick Drey to Boston.

Patrick Drey was too young to remember the Revolution, but he had lost his father in the war against the British. His eshu nature inspired him to wander the east coast, on a quest to find his inner identity. While he often came across Kithain, he did not feel very comfortable in their company. After a few years of aimless wandering, he found himself drawn to Boston, and strangely enough, to this tavern. Upon his first sight of the Liberty Tree stump, he instantly recognized the location's potential to become a freehold, and he began to seek out other Kithain who shared his vision. Two years later he met the nocker, Thurston Winters.

The two planned to work together to amass the resources to buy the tavern. Patrick had already been working there for a few years, and the owner was getting on in years. Tales of the ghosts of the Sons of Liberty rising up from their graves to haunt the tavern had begun to circulate. Most of these hauntings were, by their descriptions, exceptionally terrifying, and the number of patrons decreased drastically with the increasing number of ghostly sightings. The owner was quick to relinquish control of the haunted tavern to Patrick, offering his blessing on the "cursed place." And so, on Beltaine in the year 1834, the bonfires began to glow in the Liberty Tree Tavern.

Thurston began work on the hearth surrounding the fireplace. It took him over five years to complete, but The Fool's Gambit celebrated its official "opening" in 1839. Patrick and Thurston meant for the tavern to be opened to any Kithain who wished to seek its warmth. Too many Kithain had forgotten their nature, or had lost their connection with the Dreaming. They sought to remedy this problem. Seelie and Unseelie alike were invited, provided that all differences were left at the door. Within weeks, many Kithain traveled to the new freehold. Patrick's vision was for the tavern to be open to all, no matter what kith or court, as tribute to the great tree that was the foundation of the freehold. In 1841, Patrick renamed the tavern "The Fool's Gambit."

The freehold existed in peace for nearly forty years. The natural Glamour of the place made the inn appear old and run-down to mortal eyes. The few children who

wished to investigate the ghost stories were quickly run out by Chicanery and cunning. The Civil War did not affect the freehold directly, though many of the Kithain mourned the atrocious loss of American lives. In 1872, Patrick, growing too old to maintain the tavern, passed the ownership to a satyr named Daniel.

With the advent of the industrial revolution, Daniel began to feel the cold clutches of Banality encroaching on the freehold. The entire block was transformed into a row of factories, all with abysmal working conditions. The Kithain began to visit the tavern less and less frequently; the trips through the city were too much for their already tender ties to Glamour and the Dreaming. He began to fear the mists, and worried that Banality would take over completely. And thus, he initiated the yearly Riddle Contest.

He chose to hold the festival on the Fourth of July, in honor of the Liberty Tree and of the Sons of Liberty. In the corner of the tavern, he set a huge barrel where the Kithain could submit their riddles to share with other patrons throughout the year. He drew up the first scroll of names, and in 1876, Daniel judged the first Riddle Contest.

The first contest was mediocre in comparison to the festivity that surrounds the contest today. There were only seven participants, and two were eliminated in the first round. Only the regular patrons attended the event. But Daniel persevered, and within a few short years, the festival had earned a name for itself among the Kithain. Local Kithain began to return to Boston once more to visit the freehold, flocking to participate in the annual contest. Soon the winner was dubbed the "Riddle Master," and was promised a warm seat at any time during the year. As the size of the festival grew, it began to draw the attention of Kithain from around the world. Multitudes would travel to the American city specifically to try their wits against others of their kind, and by the end of the festival most would feel light-hearted and refreshed.

The next seventy years passed rather uneventfully for the pub. In 1969, a man who called himself Tymon walked into Boston and declared himself duke of the city and the surrounding area. He called forth all the commoners to relinquish their nomadic existence and serve him. The Fool's Gambit was at that time managed by an attractive young boggan named Brian Murphy and his wife, Margaret. Angered by the nobility's demands to recover the feudal system, the two quickly became leaders among the commoners. Tymon rejected any suggestions the Murphys brought to him and the city was soon rife with chaos and bad feelings. Commoners attacked nobility, and the nobles replied with swift and harsh justice. Despite the violence on their own street, nobles and commoners alike were still stunned when they learned that Brian Murphy had



been struck down and killed on what is now known as the Beltaine Night of Iron Knives Massacre. In a city that had always been ruled by commoners, the Kithain turned to the only one they could – the grieving widow, Margaret.

Margaret watched as the city in which she had grown up and which she dearly loved was ravished by the war. She was determined not to let this duke take control, and when the other Kithain looked to her for guidance, she recalled the spirit of those who stood here years ago and fought against their oppressive ruler. Margaret took advantage of the fact that the Kithain were already loosely organized and gathered up a small band of Kithain dedicated to ousting Tymon. She named the group the Sons of Liberty in honor of the revolutionaries who inspired her. She appointed leaders and organized groups of infantry to fight on the streets of Boston. Margaret quickly became renowned among the commoners for her participation in the Accordance War as she led her small band of patriots against the perceived tyrannical rulings of Duke Tymon. Perhaps the worst mistake he made was to demand that the commoners turn over The Fool's Gambit to a baron whom he himself had appointed.

News of High King David's ascension had yet to reach Boston. The schism between the commoners and the new nobility had grown to deadly proportions. While Margaret plotted with the Sons of Liberty, Tymon was busy plotting a means to remove Margaret without martyring her to the commoners. Margaret relied on information gathered by the vampire known as Elizabeth, while Tymon relied on rumors. This news traveled quickly, and David himself was swift to respond to the desperate situation. He ordered both parties to pay him court at The Fool's Gambit. It was here that he issued a compromise of sorts. The freehold was to remain under Margaret's care, but Boston was to be ruled benevolently by Duke Tymon. Margaret was to assemble a group of commoners to be advisors to the duke, and the duke was ordered to listen closely to the suggestions they offered. Both parties acquiesced only grudgingly.

This uneasy alliance has lasted over the span of the last few decades. The past five years, however, have seen an increase in tension between the duke and the commoners, although no blood has yet been shed. Margaret is still the owner of The Fool's Gambit, and is still the leader of the Sons of Liberty. Duke Tymon has made it widely known that he desires the freehold, and will go to any lengths to gain control of it. Margaret and the commoners won a small victory for their cause a few years ago when the knight Michael Delshire decided to leave court. His friend, John McKroan, introduced him to the accepting atmosphere of The Fool's Gambit, and they have both assisted in the fight to keep control of the tavern in the hands of the

commoners. Their knowledge of the court has enabled the Sons of Liberty to keep an even closer eye on Duke Tymon's activities.

Margaret still continues to uphold the tradition that Daniel began over a century ago, and invites all Kithain to The Fool's Gambit to participate in the annual Independence Day festival and riddle contest.

## The Sons of Liberty

*"Ours is not to reason why; Ours is but to do and die!"*

– Rally of the Sons of Liberty

The Sons of Liberty was created by Margaret Murphy during the Accordance Wars. Modeled upon the concept and ideals of the original Sons of Liberty, the group still holds with many of the principles they once avowed. Their main desire is to see Boston restored once again to a city that is ruled by commoners, for commoners. They speak out very vocally against Duke Tymon and his rulership of the city.

Their second goal is to keep The Fool's Gambit from the nobles' clutches. It is the opinion of the commoners that the tavern was formed for everyone, to stand as a middle ground, and they eschew the idea that a baron may own it strictly for his own uses. Many of the more fanatical Sons of Liberty would like to see nobles banned entirely from the freehold.

In the style of all motley groups, the Sons of Liberty are loosely organized. If any one person could be considered their leader, it would be Margaret Murphy, the owner of The Fool's Gambit. The Sons of Liberty often hold meetings at the tavern and discuss strategies for subverting the duke's rule. While membership is not restricted to commoners, the majority of those who belong do not have titles. Most members do not openly voice their affiliation with the Sons, although many are widely known to be active in the society. The nocker Kerem is suspected to be affiliated with the Sons of Liberty, as is the street thief Autolycus.

## The Riddle Contest

Every Fourth of July, while the city itself is busy with its holiday celebrations, patrons of The Fool's Gambit are invited to compete in the annual riddle contest. The Fool's Gambit is considered neutral ground on this day, and noblemen and commoners alike are called upon to test their minds against each other in a contest of wit and repartee. Any Kithain may participate, as long as the rules of the contest are strictly followed. There is to be no outside help, nor any use of cantrips or other types of Glamour. The participant will be disqualified if she is discovered to have viewed the riddles prior to the celebration. A judge will be selected before the celebration begins; his word is the law, and none may argue with his decisions. Above all else, this day is free from any politics or fighting. Independence Day is regarded as a day of freedom for the Kithain, and shall be treated as such. Kithain who fail to leave all prejudices and bad feelings outside the door will end up there themselves.

Throughout the year, a large barrel sits in the corner of the tavern, and Kithain are urged to drop their best riddles, along with the answers, into its depths. Always, by Independence Day, the barrel is filled with riddles from all around the world. On the third, the judge removes the riddles and sorts them by level of difficulty. The contest begins at noon on the fourth. Each contestant is asked a riddle by the judge. If they answer correctly, they proceed to the next level; if they do not, they are removed from the contest. The riddles get increasingly more difficult as the contest proceeds, until there are only two players remaining.

When all but two of the players have been eliminated, the participants are given a break to collect their thoughts. Play is resumed one hour later, but this time, each contestant must ask the other contestant a riddle or one that has not been asked before. This contest continues until one player has successfully stumped their opponent three times, at which point the player is declared the winner of this year's contest. A large party ensues, and usually lasts well into the next morning.

Often, as a side effect of this contest, all participants find themselves transfused with a small amount of Glamour; the longer the contest lasts, the more connected to the Dreaming they feel. The winner signs his name on the scroll that is always present on the mantle, and is guaranteed a chair by the hearth of The Fool's Gambit at any time throughout the year. Many Kithain make plans to participate, in hopes of gaining the title of the Riddle Master. For the last few years, Kerem has been declared the judge, and Kurt Thompkins has reigned as Riddle Master.

# The Regulars

Many different Kithain have frequented The Fool's Gambit; however, there are a group of regulars who can almost always be found there.

## Margaret Murphy

Margaret Murphy was born in 1945, in Boston, Massachusetts. She was fostered by the former keeper of The Fool's Gambit, and grew up under his tutelage. She found wielding Glamour easy, and her good nature made her a favorite among the patrons. She often found herself wondering what the world would be like if the nobility returned, having heard many stories of the days of their rule, and decided she preferred things just the way they were.

Margaret met Brian in early 1960. They soon fell in love, and decided to marry. In 1965, the couple took over The Fool's Gambit, continuing the traditions of the Riddle Contest and the openness to all of Kithain society that the former owners had established in previous generations. Margaret became increasingly alarmed, however, as the news spread of Kithain nobility returning to Earth.

With Duke Tymon's appearance in the city, life quickly became more complicated for this simple woman. The commoners sought the Murphys out in hope that they could shed some light on this disturbing situation. Margaret and Brian soon organized people into groups that would watch out for the patrolling nobility. Tymon declared himself duke, and proclaimed his intention to commandeer The Fool's Gambit for the use of the nobility.

The night that Brian died was a turning point in Margaret's life. Without him, she felt lost and anchorless. Though she despised the new ways and fought against the nobility, she had never desired for any Kithain to die. Instead, her convictions were rewarded with the death of her beloved. She created the Sons of Liberty and became even more vocal against the duke. Her strong leadership was a force behind which the commoners rallied.

With High King David's proclamation of freedom, Margaret was once more content to live a simpler life. She soon discovered, however, that Duke Tymon had no intention of leaving the freehold in commoner control without any noble influence. Margaret thus kept the Sons of Liberty together in vain hope that her beloved city could once more come under commoner rule.

**Court:** Seelie

**Legacies:** Bumpkin/Outlaw

**Seeming:** Grump

**Kith:** Boggan

**Physical:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2



**Social:** Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4

**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

**Talents:** Alertness 2, Athletics 1, Brawl 2, Dodge 3, Empathy 3, Kenning 2, Leadership 4, Streetwise 2

**Skills:** Drive 2, Etiquette 3, Melee 2, Music 2

**Knowledges:** Finance 3, Law 1, Medicine 2, Politics 2

**Arts:** Chicanery 2, Soothsay 3, Sovereign 2, Wayfare 2

**Realms:** Actor 3, Fae 2, Props 3

**Backgrounds:** Contacts 2, Holdings 4, Gremayre 2, Resources 2

**Glamour:** 5

**Banality:** 5

**Willpower:** 6

**Image:** Margaret appears to be a woman in her early 30s, though she is actually over 50. She towers over most people, and has an angelic quality and a noble bearing. Her violet eyes are ringed with flecks of silver, and have a sadly haunted look to them. The jeans and sweaters she normally wears look out of place on her regal frame.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You speak softly but fervently about your cause. You are a natural leader, and pay heed to what those around you have to say, analyzing all the facts with your shrewd mind. You carry a burning hatred for those who wish to take the freehold away from the commoners, and do not attempt to hide this fact.

## Michael Oelshire

Michael came into court when he was Sained fifteen years ago. He swiftly rose through Duke Tymon's ranks and was knighted on his twentieth birthday, a few days short of completing his training at the police academy. Life was very simple for Michael. His duties allowed him to remove unsavory people from the streets, and assist people in need. He loyally followed Duke Tymon's orders, and had few problems maintaining his chivalric code of honor – even in present-day society. His trusted friend and oathfriend, a pooka named John McKroan, traveled with him wherever he went. Together, they oversaw portions of Duke Tymon's duchy, and assisted in repressing any insurrections.

Michael's first real problems began five years ago when he met a young woman named Alyson Damean. He immediately fell in love with her, and began to play the muse for her singing career. John followed him loyally, although secretly he had misgivings about the match. Michael was stunned when he learned that Alyson returned his affections, and was even more surprised to discover that Duke Tymon had been courting the young lady himself. When the duke learned of the affair, he flew into a rage and forbade the young knight to see her ever again. Michael refused the duke's command and continued to try to live within the only boundaries he knew. This experience opened his eyes to how badly Tymon was treating those he considered to be beneath him. When he informed John that he was leaving court, John nodded, and brought him immediately to The Fool's Gambit. Upon hearing his tale, the patrons were quick to welcome this fallen knight.

Michael and John have since kept a close eye on Alyson. Michael dotes on her and gives her all he can of the meager salary he earns as a detective for the Boston police force. Many are worried that this romance will end painfully, but others have a more optimistic view of the couple's future.

**Court:** Seelie

**Legacies:** Saint/Wretch

**House:** Liam (Affiliation)

**Seeming:** Wilder

**Kithain:** Troll

**Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

**Social:** Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3

**Mental:** Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

**Talents:** Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Empathy 2, Kenning 2, Intimidation 2, Streetwise 2

**Skills:** Crafts 2, Drive 2, Firearms 3, Melee 3, Security 2, Stealth 2

**Knowledges:** Bureaucracy 1, Computer 1, Investigation 3, Law 2, Medicine 1

**Arts:** Legerdemain 2, Primal 4, Wayfare 1

**Realms:** Actor 2, Fae 3, Prop 2

**Backgrounds:** Chimera 2, Dreamers 1, Resources 2, Title 2, Treasures 3

**Glamour:** 4

**Banality:** 3

**Willpower:** 6

**Treasures:** Michael carries a chimerical bastard sword with him to court functions, and when performing his Kithain duties. The scabbard and hilt of the sword are ornately carved with the House Liam device, and the sword is an actual broadsword circa the 1100s. When used, blue flame erupts around the blade. The sword inflicts Str+5 aggravated damage.

**Image:** Michael's mortal seeming is that of a younger man, standing six feet four. His broad shoulders and brooding expression ward off most potential threats. In his fae mien, he stands seven feet six inches, and has long blond hair and ice blue eyes.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You are very thoughtful, and you weigh all matters against your personal code of honor. You are extremely loyal, and operate by the codex "My honor is my life." Often, you frighten people with the perpetual dark look on your face, which lifts only at the mention of your love.



## John McKroan

Even from the days of his youth, John had always been a teller of stories – whether they be on paper or the tall tales he became renowned for. The girls favored him for his impish nature, and his boyish charm. By the time he reached high school, his peers had playfully dubbed him “The Bard.” For a time, he was content with his writing and his playing. Then the Liberty Tree spoke to him.

John was at school one day when he noticed something sparkling in the distance. He blinked several times in effort to resist the almost hypnotic call of the abandoned building, but his curiosity got the better of him. He entered the run down factory, and discovered a room full of people, and a very brightly glowing table. His perceptions warped, and the world went awry. He ran out of the building, shaking his head and trying to clear his vision from the myriad of sights which assaulted him, and ran right into Michael Delshire, who was at that point a newly appointed knight of Duke Tymon’s court. The young knight quickly led the confused John to a quiet area, and explained what had happened to him. John’s impish nature and quick wits proved a good balance for Michael’s stoic nature, and they soon became close friends.

John fell into Kithain society with all of the passion and playfulness of his nature. He became a troubadour in the duke’s court, and wrote fiction on the side. He visited The Fool’s Gambit frequently to swap stories with other patrons, and soon earned himself some notoriety at the tavern. Before long he became enamored with the young barmaid, Calli, and began the arduous process of wooing her.

John also became aware of the injustices Duke Tymon was imposing upon those who patronized the tavern. He knew of Tymon’s plans to acquire the freehold for the nobles’ use, but felt powerless to help – until he began speaking with Kerem. Kerem convinced him that he could make himself useful by providing information about Tymon to the Sons of Liberty. John was all too happy to assist, and thus began his membership with the Sons of Liberty.

It came as no surprise to him when Tymon ordered Michael to stop seeing Alyson, and even less of a surprise when Michael declined. Thus, when Michael severed his ties with the court, John immediately took him to The Fool’s Gambit, knowing that in the tavern he would find those sympathetic to his plight. The two have since become valuable allies for the Sons of Liberty.

**Court:** Seelie

**Legacies:** Troubadour/Rouge

**Seeming:** Wilder

**Kith:** Pooka (Fox)

**Physical:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

**Social:** Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3

**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

**Talents:** Alertness 2, Brawl 2, Empathy 3, Kenning 3, Streetwise 3

**Skills:** Animal Ken 3, Craft 1 Drive 2, Etiquette 2

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 3, Linguistics 2, Literature 4, Medicine 1, Mythlore 3, Politics 2, Science 2

**Arts:** Chicanery 2, Primal 1, Soothsay 3

**Realms:** Actor 2, Fae 2, Nature 3

**Backgrounds:** Dreamers 1, Gremayre 4, Resources 2

**Glamour:** 6

**Banality:** 3

**Willpower:** 4

**Image:** John is an attractive man with sharp features. He has shoulder-length, shaggy auburn hair and bright blue eyes that perpetually sparkle with mischief or mirth. He is tall and slender. To the Kithain, his features are foxlike. His hair turns a deeper shade of red, and his eyes become more animallike. He is unusually cute for a pooka.

**Roleplaying Hints:** The world is a stage for you to play on – now let’s have some fun! You love telling stories, riddles, and puns and will engage anyone who sits around long enough for you to start. But remember, even though the world may be bleak at times, and Banality is always at the door, we can’t forget our romance! You enjoy a good tale of romance, especially one which you can entreat the lovely ladies to assist you in producing. You are always on the move, or seem to be, and you always wear a smile.





## Kerem

This old man can invariably be found sitting by the fireplace carving a piece of wood. If he acknowledges the presence of another, which is rare, he will simply bark, "What'd you want?" Grunting something under his breath, he will resume his carving.

No one knows how old this grump nocker is. His skin folds around his face like a blanket, and he grumbles about the past, when times were simpler. He tells the story of the first festival, implying that he was alive back then, but no one has as yet proved this to be true or false. He did fight in the Accordance War, however, and is considered something of a hero among the younger Kithain. He is overprotective of Margaret, and threatens anyone who would harm her.

**Court:** Seelie

**Legacies:** Hermit/Scrooge

**Seeming:** Grump

**Kith:** Nocker

**Physical:** Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

**Social:** Charisma 1, Manipulation 3, Appearance: 2

**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

**Talents:** Alertness 4, Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 2, Intimidation 3, Kenning 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 2

**Skills:** Crafts 4, Etiquette 2, Melee 3, Repair 5

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 3, Linguistics 3, Mythlore 4, Occult 3, Politics 2, Science 2

**Arts:** Chicanery 2, Legerdemain 1, Primal 4, Wayfare 2

**Realms:** Actor 4, Fae 2, Prop 4, Scene 2

**Backgrounds:** Chimera 4, Contacts 2, Gremayre 3

**Glamour:** 3

**Banality:** 6

**Willpower:** 7

**Image:** This old man no longer ventures out of The Fool's Gambit. He is always seen rocking in his chair, working on his latest carving. His skin is creased with countless folds, and he wears a permanent scowl. He has white hair that hangs down in his eyes, and a long white beard which is usually filled with crumbs.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You love telling stories, and you are certain that no one has heard any of your tales before. You never admit you are wrong, and you scowl frequently – even when pleased. Your hands are always busy, either carving, or fiddling with wood.

## Kurt Thompkins

Kurt became obsessed with puzzles at a very early age. First it was the rubix cube, and then it was crossword puzzles. Before long, these games began to bore him, and he turned to mystery novels; he would attempt to puzzle out the truth before the end of the story. His parents were proud of their intelligent son, but also worried about how



introverted he had become. He seemed more comfortable with his puzzles and mysteries than with real people.

Kurt's Chrysalis came late in life. He attended the University of Colorado and studied archaeology; having grown bored with ordinary puzzles, he sought to unlock the puzzles of the past. He was participating in an archaeological dig in Egypt when he suddenly found himself drawn down into an unopened tomb. Once inside, the walls sparkled and lights danced about him. There was a flash, and he awoke to find himself outside once more, but somehow changed.

An eshu chanced upon him, and took it upon himself to teach Kurt the ways of the Kithain. He was fascinated by the boy's love of puzzles, and told him of the riddle contest held in Boston every year. One year after his Chrysalis, Kurt traveled to Boston to watch the Riddle Contest. From that day on, he made a point of returning to Boston each year on the Fourth of July. Within two years of his joining the ranks of riddlers, he was crowned the Riddle Master, and he has retained the title for the past three years.

**Court:** Seelie

**Legacies:** Hermit/Peacock

**Seeming:** Wilder

**Kith:** Eshu

**Physical:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

**Social:** Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance: 2

**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

**Talents:** Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Empathy 2, Kenning 2, Search 4

**Skills:** Crafts 2, Drive 2, Survival 3, Melee 1

**Knowledges:** Computer 1, Enigmas 4, History 4, Investigation 3, Linguistics 3, Mythlore 1, Science 3

**Arts:** Legerdemain 1, Primal 3, Wayfare 3

**Realms:** Actor 1, Fae 1, Prop 2, Scene 3

**Backgrounds:** Resources 2, Gremayre 2, Mentor 2

**Glamour:** 4

**Banality:** 5

**Willpower:** 5

**Image:** Dark-skinned and slender, Kurt is about six feet tall. There is little difference between his Kithain and mortal seemings, with the exception of his eyes. When seen by Kithain, they are a deep midnight blue, and seem to stare though everything. He is always looking around; his eyes do not settle on anything for any length of time – unless it is a puzzle.

**Roleplaying Hints:** Everything is a puzzle. You speak only infrequently, and many are surprised to hear the deep bass voice that emerges from such a slender form. You are somber and thoughtful – you only rarely laugh.

## Autolycus

Autolycus made his debut in *The Fool's Gambit* two years ago. He walked in cheerfully and announced that he was Kithain and that he was here to have some fun. He would not speak of where he came from, but rather explained that he had decided to settle here on the streets of Boston. He even refused to give a name, at which point John dubbed him Autolycus, from Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*.

Autolycus took an immediate liking to Kerem, and often brings the old grump small gifts, especially any unique pieces of wood that he happens to chance upon. The two quickly became inseparable; they are commonly seen in the tavern working together on some project or another. Kerem and Margaret soon took on the role of surrogate parents to the boy, and they have since become familiar with his unusual schedule.

A year ago, Autolycus cheerfully decided that he wished to become a member of the Sons of Liberty, arguing that his street smarts would be a valuable asset, and that he wished to do whatever he could to help the cause. Margaret was uncertain, but allowed him to join. Since then, he has proved true to his word. He seems to have an uncanny knack for discovering Tymon's secrets, and has become a reliable information source for the Sons of Liberty. His past, however, still remains a mystery to Margaret and Kerem.

Besides having a good ear, Autolycus, as a child, discovered a system of secret passageways that run through the duke's large house in Cambridge. These are invaluable to his spying endeavors. Autolycus was but a small child when he



observed Tymon's brutal treatment of his commoner mother. She had failed to perform her duty to his liking, and so he lashed her with a whip. Shortly after this scene, his mother ran away from the household, leaving the child to his own devices. Within months, he became hardened to the duke's iron-fisted rule, and vowed to help bring about his demise. He spent several years searching for the one person who he thought might help him – Margaret Murphy. His mother had told him stories of how valiantly she fought during the Accordance Wars. In the Sons of Liberty, he has found the family he lost while within Duke Tymon's grasp.

**Court:** Unseelie

**Legacies:** Outlaw/Paladin

**Seeming:** Child

**Kith:** Pooka (weasel)

**Physical:** Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

**Social:** Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2

**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

**Talents:** Alertness 4, Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Empathy 2, Streetwise 4

**Skills:** Firearms 1, Stealth 3, Survival 2

**Knowledges:** Computer 2, Investigation 3, Mythlore 3

**Arts:** Chicanery 2, Legerdemain 4, Wayfare 1

**Realms:** Fae 2, Nature 3

**Backgrounds:** Dreamers 2, Mentor 2, Resources 1

**Glamour:** 5

**Banality:** 2

**Willpower:** 4

**Image:** Autolycus dresses in rags, even if given the opportunity to dress better. He is perpetually in a good mood, or at least he gives the pretense of being happy. He has an impish face, and resembles a weasel in Kithain form.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You observe everything closely; after all, you never know when you may be able to use the information. You have a quick wit, and never pass up an opportunity to play a practical joke. Your ultimate goal is to help bring about Tymon's demise, and thus avenge your mother.

## Elizabeth Whitt

Elizabeth Whitt was Embraced in the early 1920s by an unknown Malkavian Redcoat, who was enamored with her good looks, her enchanting voice, and her talent for painting. He thought to dominate her and present her to the vampire prince as a gift. Fortunately for Elizabeth, things did not go as he had planned. He disappeared the night of her Embrace and no one has seen him since. After her Embrace Elizabeth stumbled blindly through the city, confused about her new state of being.



The Malkavian Redcoats quickly found her and brought her into their circle of British Malkavians. Elizabeth, dismayed to discover the internal politics that rocked her clan, faded into her own quiet world, where she was free to be her own person. Her paintings became tortured pieces, filled with hatred and sadness.

Her work soon came to the attention of a changeling named Scott. He began to visit her, not knowing that she was a vampire. He grew to pity this woman who suffered such torment, and endeavored to help to alleviate her grief. She came to him one night, crying tears of blood and pleading for him to help her to escape the horrible politics that had torn her clan asunder. Sympathetic to her plight, he took her to the only place he could think of – The Fool's Gambit. Here, she found a small amount of solace. She became a favorite among the grumps.

She has stayed within the safety of the tavern for the past sixty years, and her dementia has increased to such a point that she believes herself to be Kithain. During the Accordance War, she used her Obfuscate abilities to hide herself among the court and garner information for the commoners. Her quiet nature and caring heart has endeared her to many Kithain, and thus she is permitted to remain within the confines of the tavern, so long as she does not cause problems.

**Sire:** Preston

**Clan:** Malkavian

**Generation:** 10th

**Haven:** The Fool's Gambit

**Physical:** Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

**Social:** Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3

**Mental:** Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

**Talents:** Acting 3, Alertness 2, Brawl 1, Empathy 4, Expression 3, Subterfuge 2

**Skills:** Animal Ken 2, Etiquette 2, Music 3, Stealth 2

**Knowledges:** Kindred Lore 3, Linguistics 2, Medicine 2, Mythlore 2

**Backgrounds:** Generation 3, Resources 2

**Disciplines:** Auspex 3, Presence 3, Obfuscate 2, Fortitude 2

**Conscience:** 4, **Self - Control:** 3, **Courage:** 2

**Willpower:** 5

**Humanity:** 7

**Merit:** Faerie Affinity

**Image:** She is a short woman with shoulder-length auburn hair. She always wears a faint smile, though her green eyes seem haunted.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You are a commoner Kithain, just like everyone else. Always feeling vulnerable next to the strength of the others, you keep your eyes averted and speak softly. You go out of your way to help others.

## Alyson Dameon

Alyson was born to a normal upper-class family in Cambridge. She and her parents both understood that she would pursue a music career, and she eventually attended Julliard. She excelled in piano, but her real talent lay in her voice.

It was at a recital that Michael first recognized her talent. He became enthralled with her voice, and made a point of becoming acquainted with her after the performance. Alyson was flattered that such a dashing young man would be interested in her, and soon grew to return his affections. Their relationship quickly became something much deeper than friendship, and she has since become very devoted to him.

Alyson was confused when Michael withdrew from her several years ago. What she did not realize was that Michael was busy extricating himself from entanglements with the court due to their affair. However, she also did not question when he returned to her a few months later. Currently, their relationship is steady. She dotes on his best friend, John, and enjoys both his and

Michael's company. They are both very supportive of her singing career, though Michael has warned her about the disadvantages of fame.

**Physical:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

**Social:** Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4

**Mental:** Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

**Talents:** Acting 3, Alertness 2, Expression 4

**Skills:** Drive 2, Etiquette 1, Music 4, Performance 3

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 2, Linguistics 2, Occult 2

**Backgrounds:** Fame 1, Resources 3

**Willpower:** 3

**Humanity:** 8

**Image:** Alyson is a slender woman, with shoulder-length auburn hair that delicately frames her face. Her appearance is more innocent than most, and her green eyes look at the world with kindness and concern.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You always smile with a quiet grace. The world around you concerns you greatly. You are deeply in love with Michael, and hope that one day he will ask you to marry him, but you are content to wait. You will do anything to help Michael, John or any of their friends.



## Story Ideas

- The Sons of Liberty are holding a meeting at The Fool's Gambit. They are trying to entice the characters to join their cause, and are giving very good arguments, when Autolycus bursts into the room and warns everyone that the duke's men are on the way. Suddenly, Duke Tymon's men show up to arrest the Sons of Liberty for treason. The characters, unfortunately, are sitting with the Sons and are accused as well. Do they stay and fight? Or do they flee with the other members of the Sons? Do the characters secretly support the duke?

- The Glamour produced by the freehold begins to decrease, causing a great deal of worry among the Kithain. Why, after so many years, is this happening? Is there some external force siphoning the Glamour away? Or has the Liberty Tree been affected by something? How can you find out?

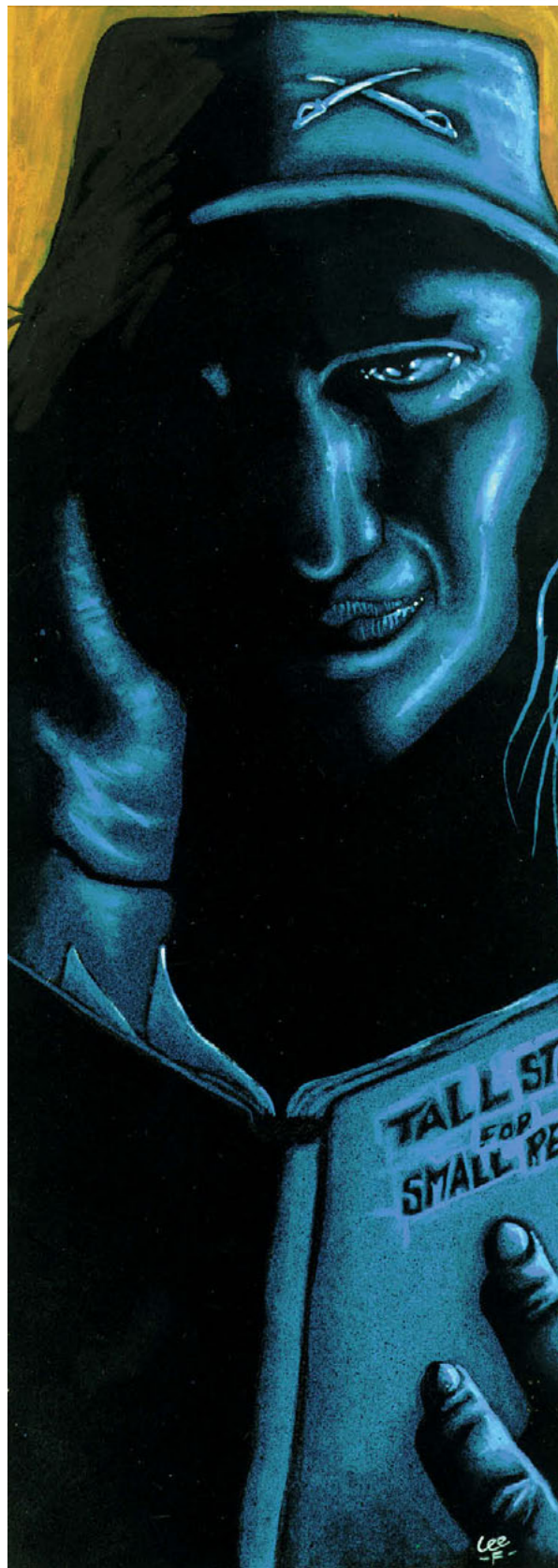
- The characters discover that a local building company has decided to revitalize the area surrounding the tavern as part of an urban renewal plan. They are planning to tear down the old factory building to make way for new construction. How can you work together to keep the tavern without revealing your true nature to the mortals?

- Duke Tymon has issued a proclamation stating that The Fool's Gambit will be put under a baron's rule in a few short days. The statement leaves no room for argument. The general sentiment of the surrounding area is outrage and anger at the tyrannical ruling. Margaret is up in arms, and ready to start another war with the Seelie Court. Is there any way around this issue, short of outright war?

- It is discovered one night at The Fool's Gambit that one of the objects on the mantle is missing! What importance does this item carry, and who would steal it from a freehold? You must find the answers to these riddles, and retrieve the stolen treasures.

- The characters are all loyal retainers of the duke. He has sent them to The Fool's Gambit to infiltrate the Sons of Liberty and to assist in regaining the freehold for the court. How are they going to convince Margaret and her band that they are loyal to their cause? Will Michael recognize the characters? What will happen to the characters if their identities are discovered?

- The vampires have finally discovered where Elizabeth spends her time. Many have never heard of the Kithain, and are curious to find out more about your society. There is a definite schism between the Malkavians, and Elizabeth pleads for the characters to help her escape the violence of vampire politics. Meanwhile, the vampire prince of the city has requested a meeting with a delegation from The Fool's Gambit. Will you assist Elizabeth, or try to work out a deal with this vampire prince?







# Chapter Three: Goblin Town

By CHRIS HOWARD

*And down down to Goblin-town  
You go, my lad!  
– J.R.R. Tolkien, The Hobbit*

## 1969: The Accordance War

The silver trumpeter swans took flight, wheeling mournfully three times around the vaulted ceiling of the grimy train station. His eyes narrowed to regard them as they departed one by one. Great warlord Oafyll, Duke of Six and a Half, Keeper of the Night's End Trod, lay dying in a pool of blood. Not all of it was his. The battle that had raged so furiously about Times Square Station only a few minutes before had moved elsewhere. Now there was only the muffled sound of the early morning commuters, striding oblivious through the carnage.

His eyes welled with tears of pain and bitterness. To die in glorious battle was the wish of many in his house, but his was to be a death born of treachery. The tattered remnants of the 4th Troll Commons Infantry had pressed his personal entourage hard in desperate ambush. Lady Sierra and his main force were mopping up commoner resistance in the village of Greenwich, too far away to lend aid. He remembered admiring the tenacity of his troll foe men. Despite their inferior numbers, they were warriors in the truest sense. His entourage reeled back, shocked by the ferocity of the onslaught. He remembered his covey, Lady Redd, Doctor Coma, and Sir Marx, battling by his side.

"Fight on! Lady Sierra knows of our plight and sends aid!" A lie, but a necessary one. A gusty hurrah rose from the lips of his men as they found new courage in his clarion cry. Embattled, but emboldened, they fought with renewed vigor. Still, they slowly lost ground, retreating farther into the station. His great sword Caliburn was in his hand, flashing with the silver-blue flame that was its hallmark. The trolls shouted in dismay as they faced Oafyll alone in the narrow confines of the station turnstiles. His House's blood sang the warrior song in his veins. The fear in the faces of his enemies came sweet to his eyes. With Caliburn in hand he feared no frontal attack. And then a pain suddenly seared his back. He saw a most familiar, but infuriatingly unidentifiable blade protrude from his chest. Stabbed from behind! The world spun about him as he fell into a swoon of midnight black.

He awoke. Blood rushed in his temples. The last of the swans departed, their song echoing into eternity. He lay alone. "Curse me for ever having put my trust in an Unseelie freehold's word!" His soul, if such he had, was rapidly departing as well. He felt the cold steel of Caliburn beneath him. Eyes closed, he summoned his will for one final act, an act of vengeance.

"What would you with me, my lord?"

His eyes opened. Above him, as radiant, as diaphanous, as wondrous as when he first, in his youth, had seen her, was the Lady of the Sword. He coughed blood.

"I depart this life, but before I do, I claim Final Resolution, as is my right as your bearer."

She nodded her consent.

"I am undone by low nocker treachery from deepest Goblin Town. Deceit has accomplished what force of arms could not. My wish, then, is for revenge. Let their finest wine be forever more sour at their lips. Let all of their artifice and guile be turned against them. Turn this way or that, may they be ensnared ever tighter in the webs of their own deceit. Let their eyes be blinded to the truth of their destruction until, too late, it stands naked and shining before them. In the end, let all their great conceits come to naught but bitter ashes. Such is my final wish."

"Your will be done. I have little work to do in this matter, however, for they have already sown the seeds of their own destruction," she said. There was the fire of the forge in her eyes, and steel in her voice. Then she regarded him tenderly, her eyes again their accustomed gold. Perhaps (he fancied), she blanched slightly. Curses were not in her nature.

"Farewell. I regret this parting, for you were a kindly master, but already my new master calls me to a greater On." Her voice faded, replaced by the caw of the chimerical scavenger crows already alighting amongst the dead.

"Fare you well," he gasped. "I place the fith-fath upon you. May your new master love you as I have loved you." Her silver flame subsided as her face receded into the long and final blackness of his dying. Lord Oafyll died in peace, knowing that he would not be the last.

...the viewer cannot help getting caught up in Escher's implied chain of levels, in which, for any one level, there is always another level above it of greater "reality," and likewise, there is always a level below, "more imaginary" than it is... However, what happens if the chain of levels is not linear, but forms a loop? What is real, then, and what is fantasy?

– Douglas Hofstadter, *Godel, Escher, Bach*

Buried deep within the bowels of Manhattan, Goblin Town is one of two major freeholds on the island (the other is the Winter Court of High King David). The freehold's (claimed) territory stretches under sixteen blocks of the eastern midtown area of Manhattan, and includes tunnels directly beneath the Ford Foundation Building. The west side of its territory touches the Grand Central Terminal, and to the east it is bordered by the United Nations Building, the East River, and the Queenstown Tunnel. The freehold's center is located directly beneath the Chrysler building. A combination of Glamour and clever architectural contrivances hides the territory from the outside world. Subway workers, homeless sewer dwellers and even supernatural entities nearly pass through the center of the freehold, completely unaware of its existence.

The Goblin Town freehold is a Chinese puzzle, a constantly shifting paradox, and a matter of grave concern for most Seelie Kithain in the New York area. The freehold's inhabitants (often referred to as "Goblins") are mostly nockers and unabashedly Unseelie in nature. Although their close proximity to the court of King David curbs the worst of their excesses, many changelings whisper rumors of unspeakable crimes committed by the goblins. Theories about the true inner workings of the freehold are rampant, though few outsiders have seen anything but the freehold's marketplace. Despite its dark reputation, Goblin Town has carved a unique niche for itself in changeling society. The inhabitants are extraordinary artisans, even by nocker standards, and their ingenious inventions are in high demand throughout Concordia. Even changelings who look down their nose at "nocker villainy" pay through that same nose to obtain their goods. The work of Goblin Town's artisans is commissioned by the elite of Kithain society, and graces much of King David's palace. This has brought them a certain degree of respectability, despite their reputation in other matters. It has also made them one of the wealthiest freeholds in Concordia.

Goblin Town is opulent by even the most jaded of changeling standards. The decor is a combination of Baroque and Victorian excess. Polished wood and brass abound. Muted, indirect amber lighting, thrown by ingenious oil lamps, glitters off a dazzling array of gold, mirrors and great works of art (human and Kithain). Even the freehold's secret passages (there are hundreds)



are luxuriously appointed affairs of dark mahogany paneling, decorated with minor art treasures. The freehold's floors are for the most part a fine wood parquet, adorned with oriental rugs. There is also a wide array of stained glass work, back-lit by oil lamps. An assortment of the nockers' cleverest inventions decorate the freehold, and hundreds of artificial creatures wander its halls. These constructs are clockwork masterpieces, animated by Glamour. They come in every breed and variety (brass storks, jade alligators, silver dragonflies, gold leopards with onyx inset spots, etc.) and outnumber the freehold's changeling inhabitants ten to one. Most of these chimerical creatures have a rudimentary intelligence, and they can become a formidable force if called upon to defend the freehold. So dazzling is the freehold's appearance that most newcomers fail to see the fiendish (and occasionally sadistic) intelligence that underlies every detail of its construction. The freehold's architecture is a mechanical marvel of the highest order, and, in a sense, is itself alive.

The inhabitants of Goblin Town thrive on paradox, riddles and outright deception. Nothing in the freehold is as it first seems. (Actually some things are, but that's just to keep them guessing.) It is an M.C. Escher drawing come to life. Stairs that seem to go up are built at such an angle that they actually go down. Doors open onto brick walls, or sheer 100' drops. Hallways, stairs, rooms, even

entire floors are built on a hidden (and completely silent) system of rollers, tracks, pulleys and switching stations. The hall that went to the library yesterday, goes to the kitchen today, and a subway tunnel tomorrow. Parts of the complex have thick plate-glass floors, allowing one to see other floors, and some of the machinery behind the scenes. The structure is powered, in part, by the tidal energy of the East River. As the various rooms shift, the stained glass windows reflect a constantly changing kaleidoscope of colors across the walls of the freehold. Some of these patterns form arcane and mysterious symbols, which may grant a deeper insight into the freehold's inner workings. The entire complex changes its outside configuration completely, cycling from a roughly crab-shaped design to a series of interconnected rings and back over the course of a year (beginning and ending at Beltaine).

The freehold carries out this amazing transformation unnoticed and unconstrained by New York's own densely packed construction. The freehold's gyrations pass by subway stations, private basements, sewer tunnels and power lines with impunity. Most of the freehold's cycle is preordained and carefully planned by its Master Builder. It also has a random element, however. Whether this random element is determined by some design eccentricity of the freehold's founder (Dr. Tapp – see History), or is caused by the grotto's chimerical nature is unknown. Some



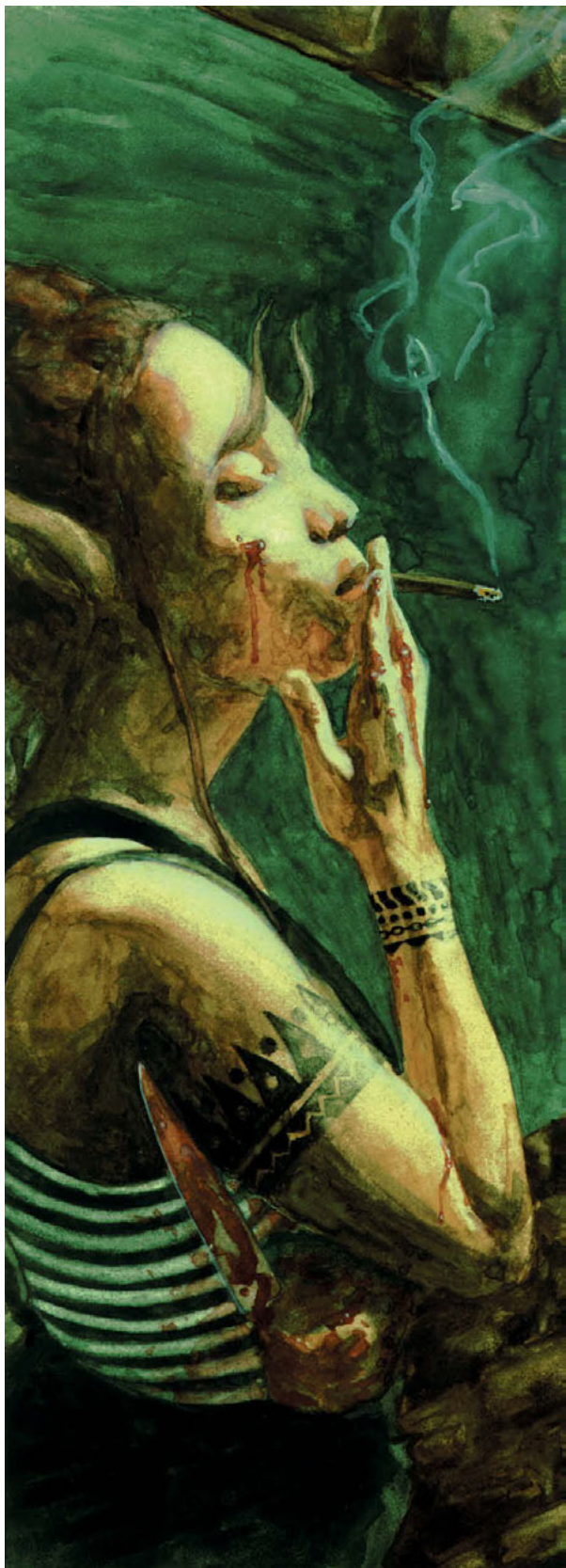


nockers hint darkly that it is caused by a more sinister agent; they point out that the random factor has only appeared recently as proof. Certainly odd things have happened of late. Because of this random element, even long-time inhabitants of the freehold get lost from time to time. The freehold's shifting nature has proved to be an ideal defense – the location of its entrances also change.

Few of Goblin Town's inhabitants are familiar with all of the freehold's complexities (Dr. Coma, Isaac Glass and Rat Breath know the most). The secret passages move as well. It is every nocker childling's dream to find an undiscovered secret passage; rumors of hidden treasure in these locations are commonplace. The freehold's growth has paralleled the city's over the years. Each new element is built in careful accordance with master plans left by Doctor Tapp, which have been carefully preserved by the freehold's successive Master Builders, as they work to integrate the freehold's steady growth with the city's construction. The freehold has purchased much of the surrounding property in order to allow for continued expansion.

Much of the heavier construction work in the freehold is done by humans. The nockers conduct occasional raids to the surface to abduct hapless citizens; these prisoners are enchanted and set to work in the black caverns beneath the city. For the most part, the nockers abduct homeless vagrants (people no one will miss). Some of those abducted, however, are skilled artisans who work to beautify the freehold, as well as to supply Glamour. (The inhabitants of Goblin Town have no moral prohibitions against Ravaging.) These are more readily missed, and the Goblins have gained several potent enemies as a result of this practice.

In addition to this trouble, the freehold's bizarre construction has begun to foster a degree of paranoia and schizophrenia in its inhabitants. In the vertiginous world of Goblin Town few things are constant and few of its inhabitants have their feet firmly on the ground. Political alliances are mercurial here and social conventions change at lightning speed. Despite this, the freehold's leader (Baroness Cadmium Redd) has managed to stay on top for over twenty-five years. The freehold's mood has grown increasingly frenetic in recent years, however, and it is doubtful that her reign will last much longer.

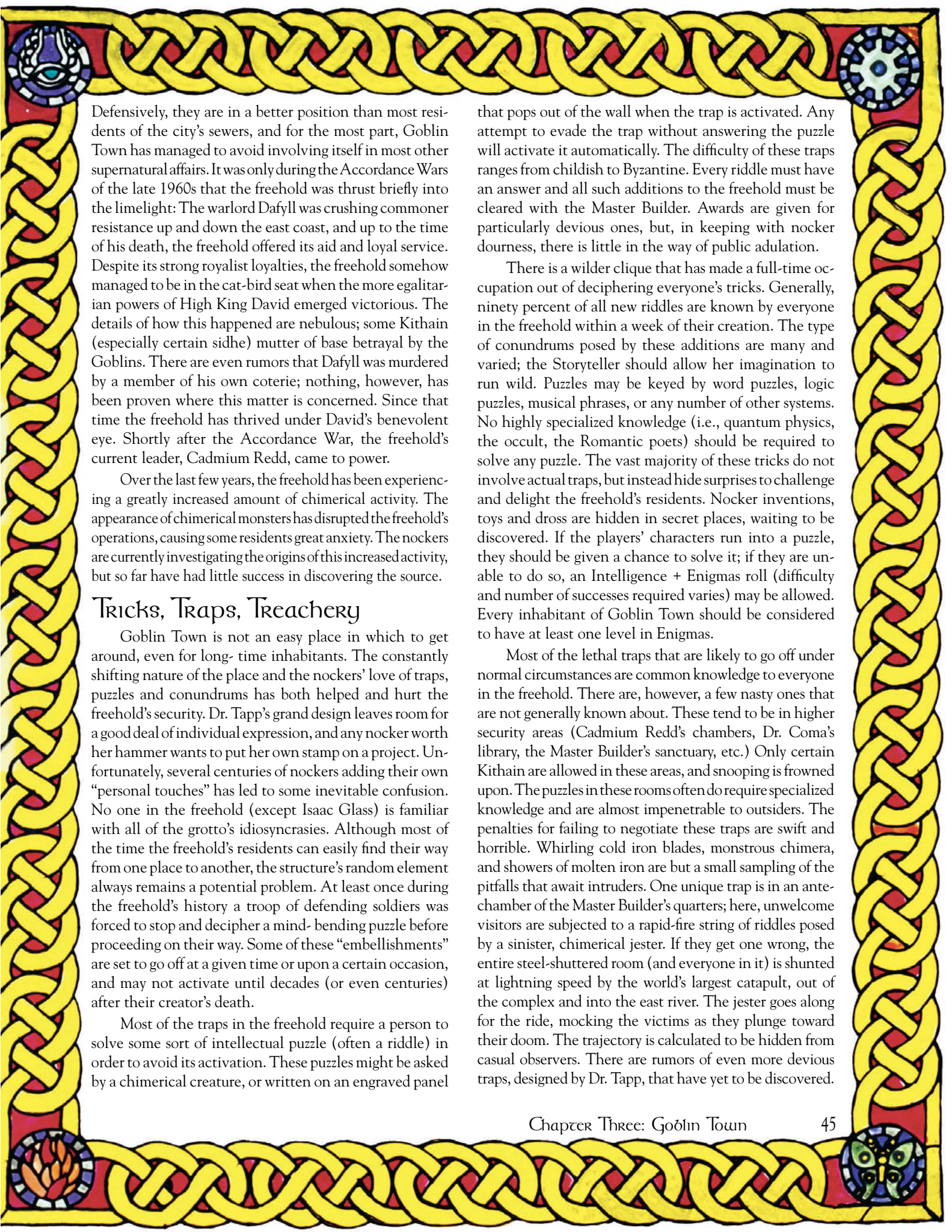


## History

Goblin Town is one of the oldest Kithain freeholds in Concordia. In 1664, Doctor Zachary Tapp, the mad nocker architect, mathematician and mystic, fled London (for what he later described as “health” reasons). His rapid departure coincided with the English seizure of New Amsterdam (now New York) from the Dutch. The earliest Kithain population of Manhattan consisted mostly of pooka, and the wily Dr. Tapp quickly gained deed to the pooka’s property. He paid little more for it than the twenty-four dollars originally paid to the native peoples for New York (thus reinforcing the nocker opinion of pooka gullibility). What the pookas failed to mention, however, was that they had only recently stolen the land from the native nunnehi, and the nunnehi were waging an active campaign to reclaim it. The pooka were almost indecently eager to get rid of the land, and the nockers were more than willing to comply (thus reinforcing the pooka opinion of nocker gullibility). The nockers spent the next twenty years in bloody combat with the nunnehi.

Tapp quickly discovered the reason for the nunnehi’s fanatical desire to regain the area. Far beneath the island’s surface was a natural Grotto of great potency. The Black Crystal Caverns (see below) were a source of naturally occurring Glamour far more potent than he had dared imagine. Word spread quickly in the nocker community. Tapp saw in the situation an ideal opportunity to realize his life-long dream of creating a living, moving piece of architectural sculpture. Every aspect of the freehold’s earliest subterranean structure was carefully designed to coincide with the structure of the growing city; its integration with the surrounding city has been almost seamless. The freehold became extremely wealthy by selling goods to both human and Kithain alike. In its early days, Goblin Town consisted merely of a series of tunnels, no more than two stories deep. As construction practices improved, however, its roots grew deeper and deeper into the island. Doctor Tapp vanished mysteriously in 1750, but left his master plans behind; the Kithain scholars who have seen them divine that there is some mystical significance to them, although they do not comprehend what it is. The blueprints were followed almost exactly over the following years, changing only to accommodate New York’s own growth needs. Construction continues through the present. (Excitement is currently high, because the Master Builder is predicting completion in five years.)

By treaty, trickery and luck the nockers have survived, and even flourished, in spite of the coming of the other sewer dwellers. They have been careful not to appear too expansionist, instead keeping to a policy of entrenchment.



Defensively, they are in a better position than most residents of the city's sewers, and for the most part, Goblin Town has managed to avoid involving itself in most other supernatural affairs. It was only during the Accordance Wars of the late 1960s that the freehold was thrust briefly into the limelight: The warlord Dafyll was crushing commoner resistance up and down the east coast, and up to the time of his death, the freehold offered its aid and loyal service. Despite its strong royalist loyalties, the freehold somehow managed to be in the cat-bird seat when the more egalitarian powers of High King David emerged victorious. The details of how this happened are nebulous; some Kithain (especially certain sidhe) mutter of base betrayal by the Goblins. There are even rumors that Dafyll was murdered by a member of his own coterie; nothing, however, has been proven where this matter is concerned. Since that time the freehold has thrived under David's benevolent eye. Shortly after the Accordance War, the freehold's current leader, Cadmium Redd, came to power.

Over the last few years, the freehold has been experiencing a greatly increased amount of chimerical activity. The appearance of chimerical monsters has disrupted the freehold's operations, causing some residents great anxiety. The nockers are currently investigating the origins of this increased activity, but so far have had little success in discovering the source.

## Tricks, Traps, Treachery

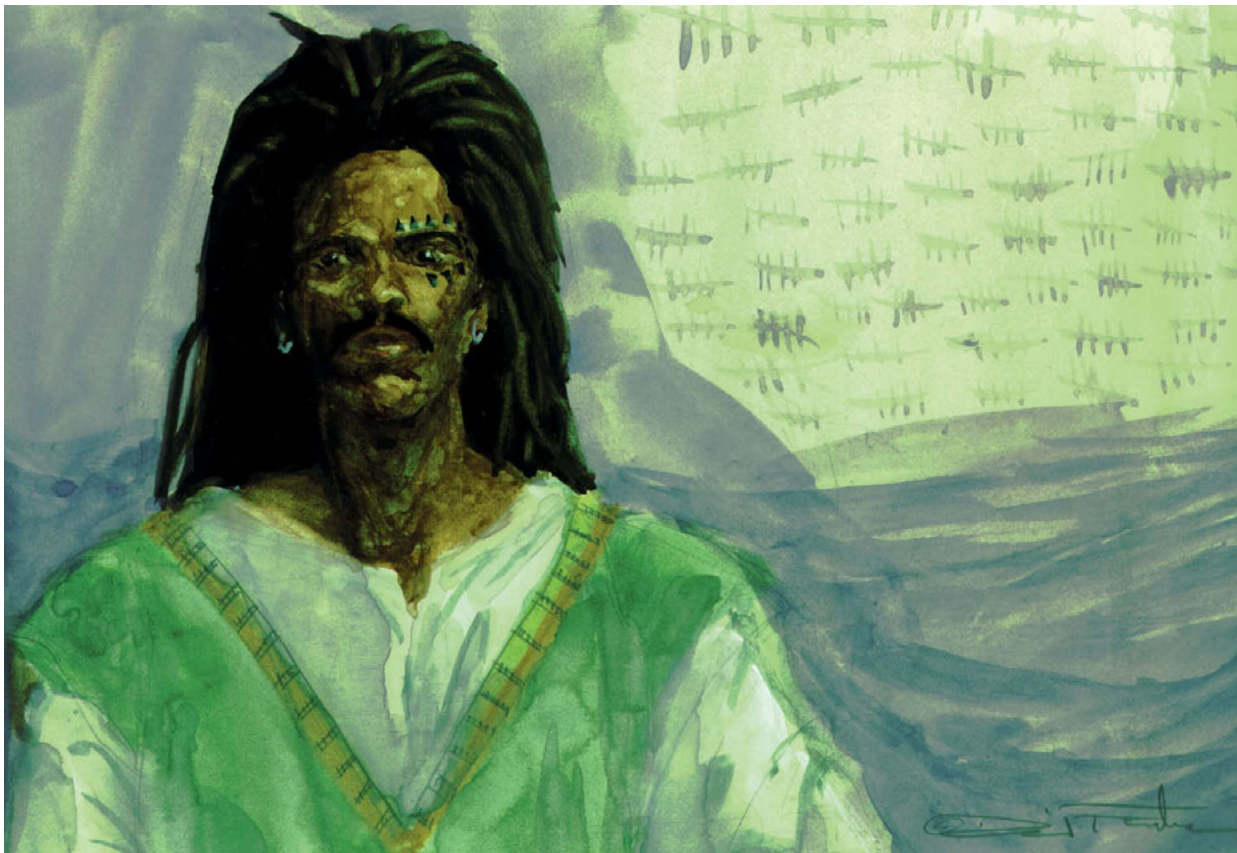
Goblin Town is not an easy place in which to get around, even for long-time inhabitants. The constantly shifting nature of the place and the nockers' love of traps, puzzles and conundrums has both helped and hurt the freehold's security. Dr. Tapp's grand design leaves room for a good deal of individual expression, and any nocker worth her hammer wants to put her own stamp on a project. Unfortunately, several centuries of nockers adding their own "personal touches" has led to some inevitable confusion. No one in the freehold (except Isaac Glass) is familiar with all of the grotto's idiosyncrasies. Although most of the time the freehold's residents can easily find their way from one place to another, the structure's random element always remains a potential problem. At least once during the freehold's history a troop of defending soldiers was forced to stop and decipher a mind-bending puzzle before proceeding on their way. Some of these "embellishments" are set to go off at a given time or upon a certain occasion, and may not activate until decades (or even centuries) after their creator's death.

Most of the traps in the freehold require a person to solve some sort of intellectual puzzle (often a riddle) in order to avoid its activation. These puzzles might be asked by a chimerical creature, or written on an engraved panel

that pops out of the wall when the trap is activated. Any attempt to evade the trap without answering the puzzle will activate it automatically. The difficulty of these traps ranges from childish to Byzantine. Every riddle must have an answer and all such additions to the freehold must be cleared with the Master Builder. Awards are given for particularly devious ones, but, in keeping with nocker dourness, there is little in the way of public adulation.

There is a wilder clique that has made a full-time occupation out of deciphering everyone's tricks. Generally, ninety percent of all new riddles are known by everyone in the freehold within a week of their creation. The type of conundrums posed by these additions are many and varied; the Storyteller should allow her imagination to run wild. Puzzles may be keyed by word puzzles, logic puzzles, musical phrases, or any number of other systems. No highly specialized knowledge (i.e., quantum physics, the occult, the Romantic poets) should be required to solve any puzzle. The vast majority of these tricks do not involve actual traps, but instead hide surprises to challenge and delight the freehold's residents. Nocker inventions, toys and dross are hidden in secret places, waiting to be discovered. If the players' characters run into a puzzle, they should be given a chance to solve it; if they are unable to do so, an Intelligence + Enigmas roll (difficulty and number of successes required varies) may be allowed. Every inhabitant of Goblin Town should be considered to have at least one level in Enigmas.

Most of the lethal traps that are likely to go off under normal circumstances are common knowledge to everyone in the freehold. There are, however, a few nasty ones that are not generally known about. These tend to be in higher security areas (Cadmium Redd's chambers, Dr. Coma's library, the Master Builder's sanctuary, etc.) Only certain Kithain are allowed in these areas, and snooping is frowned upon. The puzzles in these rooms often do require specialized knowledge and are almost impenetrable to outsiders. The penalties for failing to negotiate these traps are swift and horrible. Whirling cold iron blades, monstrous chimera, and showers of molten iron are but a small sampling of the pitfalls that await intruders. One unique trap is in an antechamber of the Master Builder's quarters; here, unwelcome visitors are subjected to a rapid-fire string of riddles posed by a sinister, chimerical jester. If they get one wrong, the entire steel-shuttered room (and everyone in it) is shunted at lightning speed by the world's largest catapult, out of the complex and into the east river. The jester goes along for the ride, mocking the victims as they plunge toward their doom. The trajectory is calculated to be hidden from casual observers. There are rumors of even more devious traps, designed by Dr. Tapp, that have yet to be discovered.



## The Curses

When Lord Dafyll died he hurled a curse of considerable potency at Goblin Town. This curse alone would be a serious threat to the freehold's existence, but it is only one of the inherent flaws underlying the grotto. The first threat is the nature of the freehold itself. The Glamour upon which it draws is unusually chaotic in nature. As a result, Goblin Town's inhabitants, unlike most changelings, are more likely to face the insanity of Bedlam than the problems of Banality. This chaotic nature also means that the freehold is a nexus for chimerical activity. Although most of these incursions have merely been a nuisance, some have been truly horrific and have resulted in fatalities. The chimera that spring from the freehold's Glamour are of a particularly devious strain and often try to obfuscate the Goblins' sense of reality. Most of the freehold's residents would argue that this is a worthwhile price to pay for such a potent source of Glamour. Some even like the chimerical incursions, and find them useful for creative reasons. This is only the tip of the iceberg, however.

When Dr. Tapp designed the freehold, he did so in accordance with certain arcane principles. His hope was that, over time, the freehold's structure would act as a mag-

nifying lens, allowing for more efficient use of the grotto's Glamour reserves. Although his plan was brilliant, he badly miscalculated the effects of his design; instead of focusing the ambient Glamour, the freehold is fracturing it, thus making it all the more chaotic and unstable. The opposite effect has been set in motion by the secret experiments of Cadmium Redd. Like some other Unseelie Kithain, she is foolishly experimenting with harnessing Banality. Although she has realized some short-term benefits, her work is antithetical to the chaotic nature of the freehold, and will eventually either destroy the freehold as a source of Glamour, or cause it to rebel completely against the Banality straight-jacket imposed by her cantrips. If the other nockers find out about her experiments, they will certainly rebel as well.

These factors, along with Dafyll's curse, are rapidly reaching fruition, and the Goblins, sensing this fact, are becoming increasingly unhinged. In fact, there are several small doomsday sects in the freehold. Of these, the Children of the Sword are the most militant and bloodthirsty; they represent everything bad that Seelie changelings say about Unseelie. The Children know that David's sword, Caliburn, was hidden in the freehold for a time, and they interpret this to be an omen to shed blood. (Their loyalty is to the sword, not King David.) The Children often go up to the

surface to cause trouble. They are vicious, even by Unseelie standards; among their other crimes, they are known to have conducted human sacrifices. How much King David knows about this (and about Dafyll's curse) is merely a matter for speculation; thus far, he has done nothing to intercede. Although the freehold may seem doomed, the Goblins are actively seeking out the source of their problems. It is possible that they may yet beat the odds.

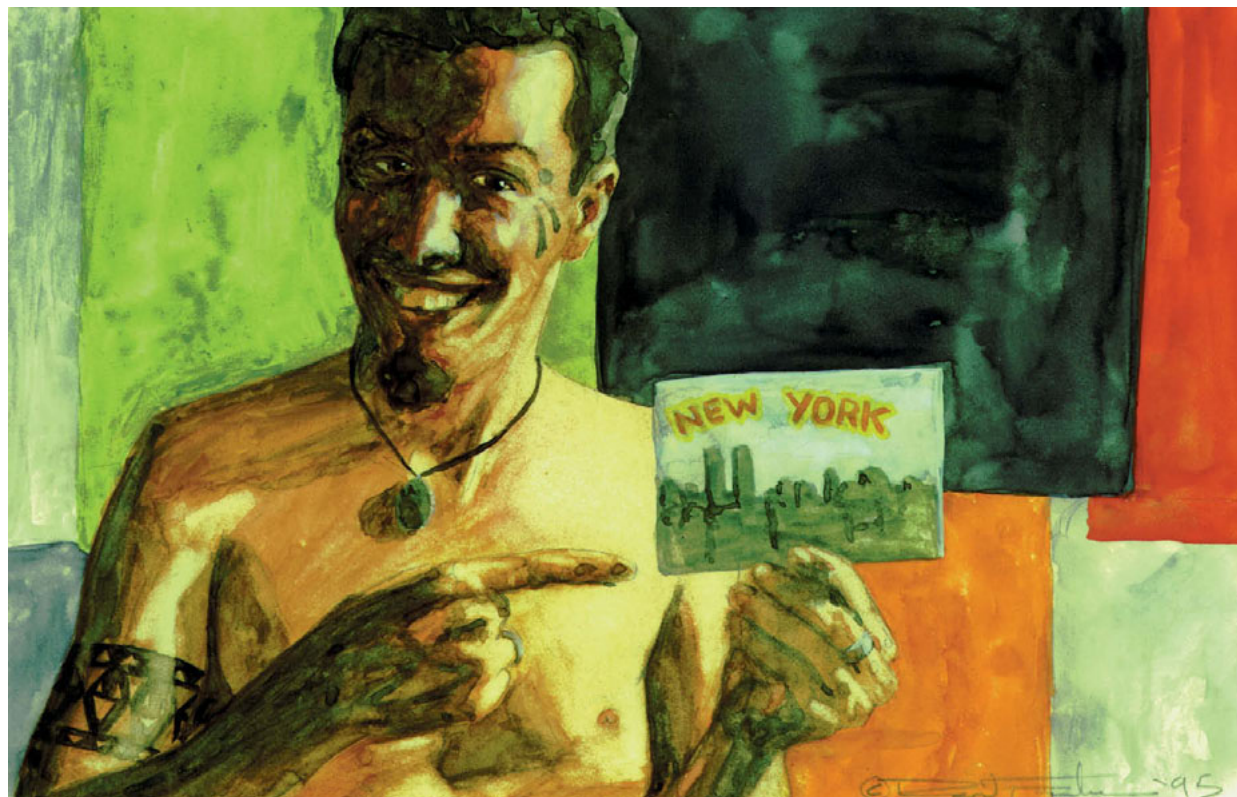
## Fulton Market

Goblin Town doesn't conduct business with other Kithain within the freehold. Instead, it has purchased a number of stalls at the Fulton Fish Market in south Manhattan. Humans who shop here will merely see fishers selling their wares. Kithain, however, will notice nockers and other changelings among the crowd. These merchants sell both fish to the mundane crowd, and extraordinarily crafted weapons, tools and luxury goods to the changelings who frequent the market. Kithain from other freeholds up and down the east coast also come here to buy and sell, thus lending the market the lively and frenetic air of a full faerie bazaar. Far and wide, the place is known as the Goblin Market. Occasionally, normal humans may "accidentally" get hold of some nocker craft; this invariably brings them bad luck. Market hours start at midnight and end around eight o'clock in the morning. Recently, part of the Fulton Market burned to the ground in an unexplained fire. While the police suspect organized crime, the Goblins have their own suspicions.

## The Black Crystal Caverns

At the freehold's core, deep below the city's surface, are the Black Crystal Caverns. The walls of this grotto are glistening black and rose quartz, which give off an eerie and pulsating luminescence. The glow appears only to those gifted with faerie sight. The cave is perpetually shrouded in a freezing, white mist, the source of which is unknown. These caves are the wellspring of the freehold's Glamour. Although the Goblins occasionally come here to replenish their Glamour, it is an unsettling, and often dangerous, experience. To reach the caves, the changeling must undertake a long and arduous descent through steep and narrow tunnels. The Caverns are over 500' down, beneath the general construction of the city. Surprisingly, the air here seems fresh, but thin (like that found on the highest mountaintops). Those who come to draw Glamour from the caves invariably suffer hallucinations of the most horrifying sort. At first the changeling might only notice the pulsing of the lights, which echo wildly through the fog. Next she will hear sibilant whispers and other fearsome noises. Bit by bit, the cave transforms itself, creating a mad-cap arena from the changeling's own dreams and memories.

The true horror of these visions lies in their subtlety. The changeling forgets where she is and becomes absorbed in the minute-to-minute experience of the nightmare tapestry woven around and within her. The cave's illusions do more



than merely pose horrific physical threats; monstrous chimera are but a piece of the milieu. There is a strong psychological component to these visions: the changeling finds herself faced with her own flaws and hidden fears. The Storyteller should be creative in tailor-making the nightmarish scenarios to fit each character. The visions are different each time the character visits. If the changeling successfully grapples with these visions (Willpower roll, difficulty 7, two successes needed) she completely restores her supply of Glamour. This can be a potent tool indeed. If the character fails to face her fears, however, she will find herself in the Second Threshold of Bedlam, unable to deal with the mundane world in any but the most limited ways. This effect lasts up to a month (Storyteller's discretion). If the player botches the roll, the character is not only in a state of Bedlam, but loses a permanent dot in all mundane Abilities involving modern technology (i.e., Drive, Firearms, Computer, Science). There have been changelings who have ventured into the Caverns and disappeared, never to return.

## New York Politics

Goblin Town has been careful not to cross swords with the many groups battling for supremacy in New York. Among the Gallain, the vampires who call themselves the Sabbat are easily the most powerful presence in the city. Their grip is hotly contested by another group of vampires. Other groups, such as the werewolves (See **Rage Across New York**), are also contenders in the battle for the city. Most of these are unaware of the freehold (with a few notable exceptions) and the Goblins have worked to keep it this way. For the Kithain, New York is a major crossroads. The high court of Tara-Nar is just north of the city in the Catskill Mountains. Within the city, a few mere miles away from the Goblins, is the Winter Palace of King David. Both of these courts are a mecca for Kithain throughout Concordia. Goblin Town's location near these two important freeholds has made it rich and powerful, as well as strategically important. Several groups have, for their own reasons, secret designs on the freehold. It is rumored that the recently returned "true" Unseelie court has investigated it thoroughly.

## Allies

Due to their disagreeable natures and the occasional atrocities that are attributed to them, the Goblins do not have many friends. Their only stable allies come from a most unexpected source. The Goblins have cultivated a working relationship with a local sect of mages known as the Sons of Ether. Nockers and the Sons of Ether both have common underlying assumptions when it comes to their magic/craft/pseudo-science (call it what you will).

## The Ghastly

The Ghastly is an ancient being of inhuman intelligence and malice. It is a creature of chaos and sheer, unbridled Glamour. The nunnehi knew of it and did battle with it in past millennia. For centuries, it has been dormant in the Dreamrealms surrounding New York City. Its slumbering consciousness is centered in the Black Crystal Caverns, and serves as the source for much of the freeholds Glamour. The Goblins have unknowingly drawn power from its chaotic dreams for many centuries. In return, it has fed off their dreams and their creativity (in effect, Ravaging them), processing this back into the chaotic Glamour that is the freeholds trademark. If the nockers are aware that the Ghastly exists, it is only on the most subconscious level. None of them (except, perhaps, Or. Tapp) have ever guessed that there is an overriding intelligence to their grotto. The Ghastly is subtle, even in slumber. It has insinuated aspects of its consciousness into every nook, cranny and soul in the freehold.

The chimera that plague the freehold also draw their substance from it. In waking form, the Ghastly manifests as a dense, rolling white fog. Colors flash through it and inhuman screams emanate from its center. In this form, it is visible to changelings and mundane creatures alike. Any Garou encountering it would notice that it is a creature of the Wyld corrupted by the Wyrm, a force of nature that is twisted and evil. Its primary power is the creation of both incredibly sophisticated illusions and chimera (Legerdemain 5, Chicanery 5, Sovereign 5). Because it lacks physical substance, the Ghastly cannot be destroyed by conventional means. Cadmium Redd's experiments with Banality have disturbed its slumber; it has already opened one eye.

Goblin Town is an Ether mage's idea of heaven. This commonality of interest has lead the Sons to generally overlook the nocker's unwholesome reputation. The nockers, in return have been very honest (uncharacteristically so) in their dealings with the mages. Goblin Town has a tentative, but slowly growing, alliance with these mages.

## Enemies

Despite its low profile, Goblin Town has a number of acquaintances who regard it with anything from guarded mistrust to out-right hostility. The nunnehi continue to cast a baleful eye on the freehold, even after all these centuries. The Goblins have also raised the disapprobation of the Beltaine Blade, a secret group of sidhe loyalists, who have not forgotten the freehold's alleged part in Dafyll's death. The Beltaine Blade also has contempt for King David, whom they consider to be too much of a populist. On the other side of this coin, one of the freehold's most important personages (Dr. Coma) is a member of the Ranters, a radical commoner's group which despises the sidhe and all changeling loyalists. The freehold has even gained the secret enmity of a Ventrue vampire elder (see Dr. Tapp in London, below). Goblin Town's most consistent and active enemies, however, are human and Garou. The freehold's practice of abducting homeless people into slavery has engendered implacable hatred of both of these groups. A collection of the city's homeless tirelessly hunts for the freehold's location. Led by a brother and sister team of Dauntains, they have come close on several occasions. A far greater threat is posed by the Garou Bone Gnawer pack known as the Circus Lupus (see the **Werewolf** supplement, **Project Twilight**). The Circus consists of young Garou who consider it their duty to protect the city's homeless. They know about the freehold (though not its exact location) and are bitterly opposed to it. Goblins who run into the Circus Lupus are not likely to survive the encounter. Many residents of Goblin Town smell faintly of the Wyrms, to Garou with the Gift, Sense Wyrms (Perception + Alertness, difficulty 9).

## Groups

The whirlwind of politics surrounding the freehold has given rise to a number of factions. The following are some examples.

### The Ranters

The Ranters are a radical circle of changeling commoners who despise royalty. They have existed since the 17th century and may have been behind the human group of the same name. Politically they are Anarcho-Syndicalist in nature. This obviously hasn't gone over well with the sidhe, who are used to having their own way. The Ranters are organized into small cells, so that if one is captured, she cannot betray the entire organization. The Kithain in a given cell are oathbound to each other. The Ranters have contacts in other supernatural communities, including the Garou Monkeywrenchers and the vampire Anarchs.

Their sidhe enemies also rumor that they are allied with the nunnehi. The Ranters have instigated terrorist actions against particularly despotic nobles, and this has made them fairly popular amongst a large population of commoners. Their leader is a shadowy Kithain known only as Ravachol. The Ranters have been declared outlaws by King David, in spite of his commoner sympathies.

### The Beltaine Blade

The Beltaine Blade is a shadowy, secret organization, somewhat akin to the historic Star Chamber. Its members are sidhe nobles who are dedicated to the preservation of the traditional oligarchy. Although the organization supports the monarchy in principle, it is far more interested in empowering the feudal nobles. To this end, they have worked to weaken King David, while tightening the grip of their own power. The Beltaine Blade has adherents in powerful positions, including some within the court of Tara-Nar. Although the Beltaine Blade is exclusively sidhe, it uses commoner races as soldiers and assassins. The Blade has contacts among the clan of vampires known as the Ventrue. They have recently informed an Elder of that clan about Dr. Tapp's part in her brother's death (see below).

### Dr. Tapp in London

Doctor Tapp's reputation as an architect took a major blow when he accepted a commission from a lord of the London Ventrue. Unaware of his employer's vampiric nature, he determined to surprise his patrons with an early example of his moving architecture. At high noon of each equinox the ceiling of the mansion's ballroom rolled back to expose a secondary ceiling of colored glass and iron scaffolding. The effect was to be a delightful dappling as the colored sunlight played against the rich marble of the walls and floor. The result, however, was distressingly different: The mansion's lord and a visiting delegation of French Toreador received an impromptu sun-burn. After barely escaping an assassination attempt by the Ventrue, Tapp left London and never returned. Recently the Ventrue's sister (also a powerful Ventrue) discovered, through her contacts in the Beltaine Blade, the reason for her brother's demise. She doesn't know it was an accident (and probably wouldn't care). She holds Tapp's adopted children, the denizens of Goblin Town, responsible. Her exact plans for revenge are unknown.

## Personalities



### Cadmium Redd

Cadmium started out as a populist, commoner leader. In her early years she served the freehold as captain of the guard. During the Accordance War, she used her popularity to swing the freehold's support to the royalist cause, and she rose swiftly through the commoner ranks as the war progressed. After the war, she used guile and force to gain possession of the freehold. This combination has served her well to present, but she has become increasingly authoritarian and unstable in recent years, and this leadership style does not sit well with her subjects, most of whom are intellectuals. Recently, she formed a private Red Guard, consisting of four redcaps. This has not gone over well; her subordinates now whisper that she has lost her mind.

**Court:** Unseelie

**Unseelie:** Beast/Bumpkin

**Seeming:** Grump

**Kith:** Nocker

**Physical:** Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

**Social:** Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2

**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

**Talents:** Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 4, Dodge 2, Intimidation 5, Kenning 3, Subterfuge 3

**Skills:** Etiquette 1, Leadership 3, Melee 4 (club), Stealth 2

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 3, Mythlore 2, Occult 2, Politics 3

**Arts:** Chicanery 3, Primal 1, Sovereign 4, Wayfare 3

**Realms:** Actor 5, Fae 2, Props 2, Scene 3

**Backgrounds:** Contacts 4, Gremayre 2, Holdings 4, Resources 4, Retinue 4, Treasures 4 (rod and armor)

**Glamour:** 5

**Willpower:** 8

**Banality:** 7 (May use Banality in place of Glamour)

**Image:** In her human form, Cadmium is a large, imposing woman in her late forties. She has severely pulled-back hair that is beginning to gray, and she usually wears red business suits. In her faerie guise she bears an unsettling resemblance to the Red Queen in *Through the Looking Glass*. Her skin is lobster red and tight as a drum, her hair is a stark white, and she always has an imperious look on her face. Her clothes are richly designed, but severe in outline (lots of sharp angles). Her favorite jewelry is, of course, rubies; she wears a ruby tiara as her symbol of office. She carries a large and imposing black iron rod, the handle of which is wrapped in leather, and which is topped by a ram's head. The ram has ruby eyes, which glow in battle. Cadmium also has a suit of armor made of red gold. In battle she is a shrieking, cursing, spitting, whirling dervish. Many battles she is capable of winning by sheer intimidation.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You earned your right to lead this freehold and no one had better forget it. You know that you are not one of the century's great thinkers and you consider this an advantage. You are shrewd, though. Power is not the province of the cautious scholar, but of those daring enough to grab it. Your one piece of intellectual curiosity is satisfied by your experiments with (so called) Banality. Glamour is rarer than water in the Sahara these days and those who don't learn to adapt will die. You suspect that Dr. Coma killed Dafyll that night in the subways, but since his death served your purposes, you have done nothing. You have fears you will not admit, even to yourself.

**Note:** You are addicted to the use of Banality and can no longer use Glamour as easily as you once did (2 pts. to do the work of one). Furthermore, your use of Banality has made you the personal target of several chimerical attacks. Recently, a headless knight attacked you during a ceremony of state. The attack was repelled, but it left you badly shaken.

## Doctor Coma (Seer)

Doctor Coma was a leader in the counter culture of the 60s. He was friends with Cadmium Redd, who was also once a radical populist (until it no longer served her purpose to be one). Coma now considers her a traitor to the cause. He sticks around because he considers Goblin Town to be too important to leave in her hands. He has recently discovered that Cadmium is tapping Banality, and he is letting word about this leak out slowly in order to pave the way for the revolt.



**Court:** Unseelie

**Unseelie:** Riddler/Paladin

**Seeming:** Grump

**Kith:** Sluagh

**Physical:** Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

**Social:** Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 1

**Mental:** Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 5

**Talents:** Alertness 4, Dodge 3, Empathy 4, Expression 4, Intimidation 3, Kenning 4, Subterfuge 4

**Skills:** Drive 1, Etiquette 2, Firearms 2, Leadership 3, Melee 3 (Stiletto), Stealth 5

**Knowledges:** Computer 1, Enigmas 4, Investigation 3, Mythlore 4, Occult 4, Politics 4

**Arts:** Chicanery 5, Legerdemain 2, Soothsaying 2, Sovereign 2, Wayfare 2

**Realms:** Actor 4, Fae 3, Nature 5, Props 1, Scene 1

**Backgrounds:** Chimera 4 (Raven spy), Contacts 5, Gremayre 4, Treasures 2

**Glamour:** 9

**Willpower:** 6

**Banality:** 6

**Image:** Dr. Coma is an extremely gaunt beatnik of indeterminate age. He wears the typical beat uniform of basic black, sometimes accompanied by a worn tweed jacket, and he perpetually wears a pair of dark round sunglasses. There is often a raven perched on his shoulder. In his faerie demeanor, Coma is a rail-thin patch of midnight. Light seems to fall into him, like a human black hole. He is exceptionally tall and has straight, black, shoulder-length hair. His skin is bone white and his eyes are like twin pieces of polished onyx. His clothes are black, trimmed with silver, and of the style worn in France during the Age of Reason.

**Roleplaying Hints:** Power to the people! That's been your clarion call your entire life. You are an anarchist in the classical sense of the word and believe that all people should live unfettered by power from above. That's why you belong to the Ranters. That's also why you pretended to join Dafyll and the loyalists during the Accordance War – so you could disrupt them from the inside. You only wish that you were the one who stuck the blade in the pig's back. Now you're in a position of "responsibility" here. Being the court seer has allowed you to subvert Redd's orders right down the line; you've succeeded in freeing many of her brain-washed human slaves. The people of the freehold are sick of the petty dictator, and you know that the time is right for revolution. Maybe they'll march her head on a pike around the city, like they did with Dafyll's. Serves her right.

## Isaac Glass (Master Builder)

Glass was raised to be the freehold's Master Builder. His father (the last Master Builder) was killed during the Accordance War in the Beltaine Night Iron Knives Massacre. For this he holds something of a grudge against the sidhe. In addition to his architectural mastery, he is an accomplished



artisan and is responsible for many of the walking animal sculptures of the freehold. Having read Tapp's writings extensively, he is knowledgeable about all aspects of the freehold. He knows that something big is coming down and is prepared to do his best to protect Goblin Town.

**Court:** Unseelie

**Unseelie:** Riddler/Crafter

**Seeming:** Wilder

**Kith:** Nocker

**Physical:** Strength 1, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

**Social:** Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2

**Mental:** Perception 5, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

**Talents:** Alertness 5, Dodge 4, Empathy 2, Expression 2, Kenning 4, Subterfuge 2

**Skills:** Crafts 5, Security 4, Stealth 4

**Knowledges:** Area Knowledge 5 (Freehold), Architecture 5, Computers 2, Enigmas 5, Investigation 3, Mythlore 4, Politics 2

**Arts:** Chicanery 3, Legerdemain 3, Wayfare 4

**Realms:** Fae 5, Props 3, Scene 5 (Freehold)

**Background:** Chimera 5, Gremayre 4, Resources 3

**Glamour:** 10

**Willpower:** 4

**Banality:** 3

**Image:** Isaac Glass is a small man in his early thirties. He has lank, but well-groomed black hair, and is somewhat sickly in appearance. He speaks with a tremor in his voice, his hands shake perpetually, and he moves with a kind of nervous energy. He wears a thick pair of spectacles and is always neatly dressed in a three-piece suit, with highly polished shoes. His faerie aspect is much the same, though his clothes are more archaic (late 19th century) and his glasses become a pince-nez. He is shorter than mostnockers and his skin is a pale yellow, although his hands are always stained with ink from the feather quill pen he uses. He is usually accompanied by an unusually large, glassy eyed nocker (really a chimerical golem) and a small jeweled dragon.

**Roleplaying Hints:** Sigh. Just spoke with Madam Redd. She demanded a map of the secret passages leading to Coma's chambers... again. You told her "no," of course. Good thing you're such a fast ducker. She just doesn't understand that being the Master Builder is a sacred trust, a trust you take seriously. This place is beautiful, and if you weren't Master Builder here, you'd be nothing at all. You try to share your enthusiasm for the freehold with anyone who will listen. There are those here who want to corrupt the freehold for political gains: You know who they are and you keep an eye on them. Because you have a hidden Seelie side, you are somewhat unpopular with many in the freehold. You are also highly sentimental.

**Note:** Glass knows the grotto so well that he can appear and disappear like magic (O.K., so it is magic). Although not much of a fighter, Glass is protected at all times by a powerful chimerical golem of his own construction. He also has a small jeweled dragon that acts as his eyes and ears around the freehold.

## Lady Alexandria (Tara-Nar ambassador/Assassin)

A river couldn't wash away all the blood on Alexandria's hands. Her taste for murder led her to drown her baby sister, when she was four years old, because she couldn't bear the loss of her parents' attention. Her mother and father were killed in a crossfire during an ambush outside Lord Dafyll's estate; she survived only by sheer chance. Recognizing her fae nature, Dafyll adopted her into his household and took her on as his own fosterling. While under his care, she committed many wanton acts of savagery, always knowing that she was above suspicion because she was the king's ward.

In fact it was Alexandria who arranged Dafyll's murder, convincing her beloved, Rat Breath, to perform the deed for her. At the time she felt that his death would give her greater power; however, this plan backfired and instead she has to scrounge for every bit of power she can grasp. It seemed that being only a childling, and a fosterling of Dafyll's, did not count for as much as she had anticipated among the Seelie court.

After Dafyll's death, she spaced her crimes further apart in order to avoid arousing suspicion. She grew up in both her own court and the High King's court of Tara-Nar. She has played the court games of intrigue with all the skill of an Eiluned sidhe, but has only minor status there.



Still, one day.... She has the common touch and is loved by the commoners, who have decided to forgive and forget that she was the daughter of the hated Lord Dafyll. Her long-time companion, Rat Breath, is both her bodyguard and her most consistent lover. Although she conducts all of her affairs on her terms, it is possible that she may come to a bad end eventually. She secretly despises Lady Sierra, who has been like a mother to her. She is also an extremely potent magician.

**Court:** Unseelie

**Unseelie:** Peacock/Courtier

**Seeming:** Wilder

**Kith:** Sidhe

**House:** Fiona

**Physical:** Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4

**Social:** Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 6

**Mental:** Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

**Talents:** Alertness 4, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 4, Empathy 4, Expression 4, Intimidation 3, Kenning 3, Subterfuge 5 (Seduction)

**Skills:** Etiquette 4, Leadership 2, Melee 4 (Dirty Fighting), Performance 2, Stealth 4

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 3, Investigation 2, Linguistics 1 (French), Mythlore 3, Occult 3, Politics 4

**Arts:** Chicanery 5, Primal 2, Soothsaying 3, Sovereign 4, Wayfare 3

**Realms:** Actor 5, Fae 5, Nature 1, Props 3, Scene 1

**Backgrounds:** Contacts 5, Dreamers 4, Gremayre 3, Resources 5, Retinue 2, Titles 3, Treasures 4

**Glamour:** 8

**Willpower:** 6

**Banality:** 5

**Image:** Lady Alexandria has skin like polished mahogany, eyes like bronze in firelight and the figure of a goddess. She has long, straight, black hair and dresses in ornate silks of red and gold. She doesn't walk; she glides. In court she carries a redwood staff, with a carved serpent twined around it. In all things she radiates the beauty, the strength and the dignity of the sidhe. Too bad she's such a rotter.

**Roleplaying Hints:** Ah, poor Lord Dafyll. He was like a father to you, really. He adopted you as his only daughter, when your real parents died in that savage commoner attack. You were only five when he was killed in battle. Of course his fortunes fell to you (and his human son). You are the epitome of the gentile and passionate lady of the court, both here and at Tara-Nar. Hold yourself with the dignity of a noble-born sidhe, treat all with kindness, low born and high, and watch how people gloss over the fact that things always seem to work in your favor. You

are the ultimate "innocent bystander." Good things just seem to happen to you. In reality you make few moves that are not coldly calculated. You can spot and exploit weakness from a mile away. Your one flaw is your preference of paramours. You are wooed by the finest the sidhe have to offer, but have an inexplicable taste for redcaps (you keep this very secret).



## Rat Breath (Court Wastrel)

It was the Accordance War, and a childling redcap was given the honor of being the standard-bearer in Dafyll's retinue on that fateful day. The trolls had forced them into the narrow confines of the turnstiles. "Run! I will cover your retreat!" Dafyll shouted. The old man had guts, give him that. The old fool. In the shadows and the confusion, what with trolls throwing those damn exploding rocks and all, it was too bloody easy. A blade twisted cruelly in the back. An exhilarating rush of hot blood and a redcap boy became a man. Then there was the reward, a kiss on the cheek from a fairy princess. Rat Breath has been enslaved to Alexandria's will since he first saw her in Dafyll's garden. He realizes she is using him, but doesn't care. He will probably die in her service, or kill her in a jealous rage. That's the way these star-crossed romances go sometimes.

**Court:** Unseelie

**Unseelie:** Savage/Bumpkin

**Seeming:** Wilder

**Kith:** Redcap

**Physical:** Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

**Social:** Charisma 1, Manipulation 2, Appearance 1

**Mental:** Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

**Talents:** Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 4, Intimidation 4, Kenning 2, Subterfuge 2

**Skills:** Etiquette 1 (rarely used), Firearms 3, Melee 5 (Back Stabbing), Stealth 5, Survival 3

**Knowledges:** Investigation 2, Enigmas 2, Occult 2

**Arts:** Chicanery 2, Legerdemain 3, Primal 3

**Realms:** Fae 2, Nature 4, Props 3

**Backgrounds:** Gremayre 3, Resources 2, Treasures 3

**Glamour:** 6

**Willpower:** 5

**Banality:** 5

**Image:** Rat Breath is small, unshaven and generally ratlike. He has beady black eyes and perfect, straight, blue-white teeth. He dresses in tattered black motorcycle leathers with gang patches. In his faerie form he wears a brown and black leather jerkin reminiscent of peasant garb from the Middle Ages. Instead of a red cap he wears a black felt hat with a long red feather in it. He is rarely seen without his curved, black short sword.

**Roleplaying Hints:** *Gwar, looket eer. Nocker wimmen just knocks me out. Likes takin' 'em by surprise in the kitchen, I does. Whatya got cookin' in there, luv? – Oh, furkitallta' hell! Yes, my dear and dread lady? Murder squire Tom? As I am a knight and my word is my bond. It will be done. Roastin's best, I think.*

You have two personalities. One is murderous and foul, the other (when you are around Lady Alexandria and other sidhe) is charming and obsequious. Anyone with common sense avoids you like a hungover troll. Most changelings just tut-tut and sigh that it is such a pity that Lady Alexandria (a changeling of breeding) doesn't know her servant's true nature. (She is generous to a fault.) She is of House Fiona, so it doesn't seem so strange. They don't know that she encourages you in your aberrant behavior, or that you are lovers. You are merciless to those weaker than you, but then pour on the charm for your sidhe lords. You are a veritable magician with a sword.

## Other Personalities

### Lady Sierra

Lady Sierra is a warrior sidhe of House Gwydion and the former lover of Lord Dafyll. She has not known love since his death. She is now a well-respected figure at Tara-Nar, and has the High King's ear. She doesn't trust Goblin Town and has sent her beloved adopted daughter, Alexandria, to keep an eye on things there. She bears something of a grudge against the freehold, suspecting Goblin complicity in Dafyll's death (her main suspect is Cadmium Redd). She is too noble and honest to let this grudge affect her judgment, however. Cadmium Redd dislikes her, because she perceives that she is working against the freehold's interests. Doctor Coma has a sneaking admiration for her.

### Lord Dray

Lord Dray is a duke of House Gwydion and was Dafyll's cousin. Dray has used his position at court to undercut Goblin Town whenever possible. He has openly accused the freehold of plotting against the throne, though he has offered little in the way of proof and has, thus far, done the freehold little harm. He is secretly one of the leaders of the Beltaine Blade.

### Lady Chandler

Lady Chandler is a 500-year-old Ventrue Elder of the seventh generation. She is the sister of the Ventrue accidentally killed by the freehold's founder, Dr. Tapp, and is currently gathering information about the freehold in preparation for her eventual revenge. She is very subtle and will not attack the freehold directly. Lady Chandler is a lover of irony; her ultimate vengeance will involve some ironic twist on her brother's death.

# Story Ideas

## FOR RESIDENTS OF GOBLIN TOWN

- The players are in a part of the freehold that they shouldn't be and accidentally trigger a three-hundred-year-old trap (a Tapp original). The freehold starts moving in reverse and is destroying itself at the rate of 2% a day. The characters must find a way to stop it before the freehold completely self-destructs.

- The city announces that it is building a new extension to the subway. This extension is to run directly through the freehold's center. The usual attempts to bribe or charm city officials are unsuccessful. There is obviously a powerful supernatural entity behind this, but who?

- A nocker guard is found torn to shreds in one of the outer halls of the freehold. Security has been breached! Is it the nunnehi? Or perhaps that pack of Gallain (werewolves)? Perhaps it is something far worse.Ö

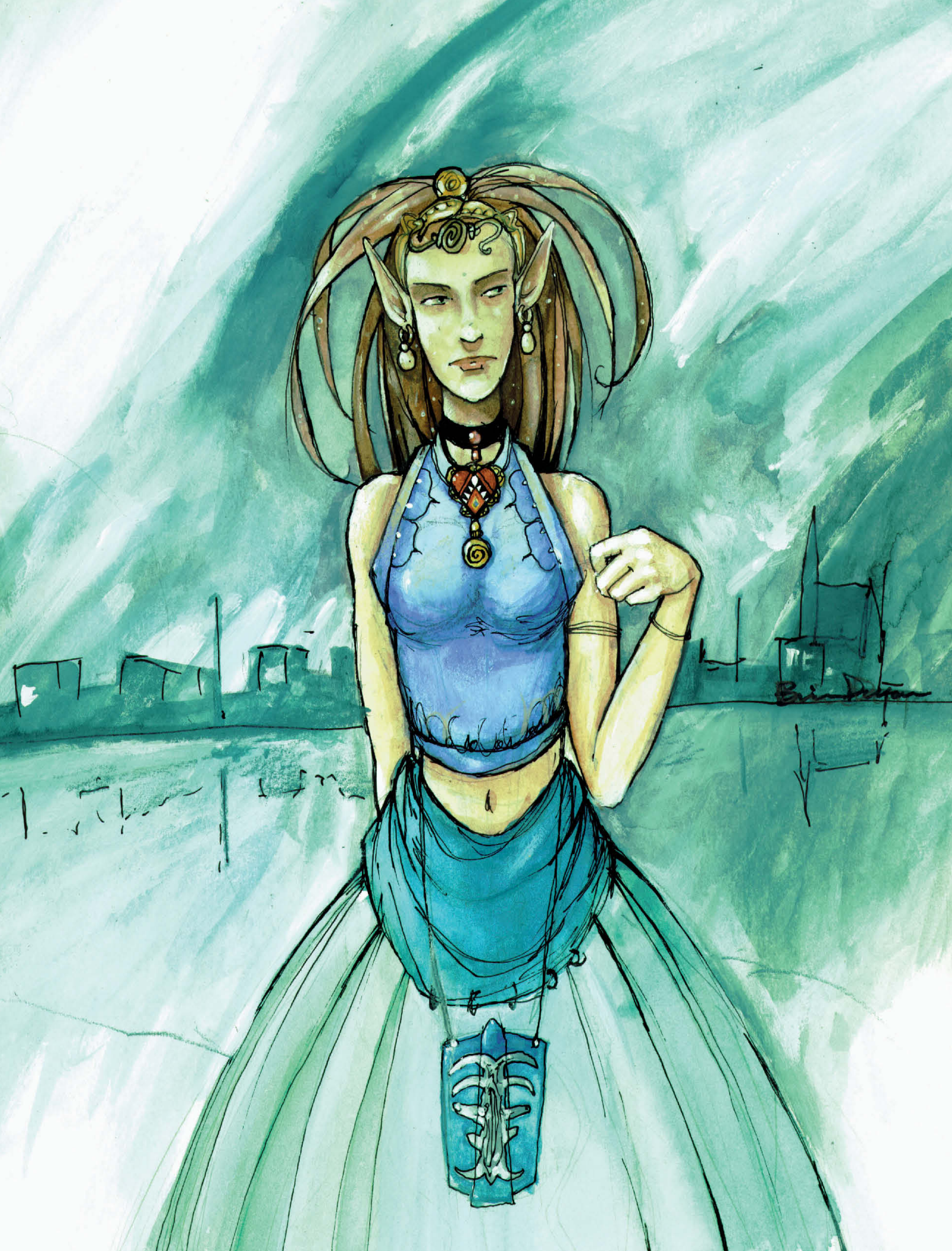
- The Ghastly begins to awaken and all the freehold's attempts to stop it are unsuccessful. An ancient book reveals that the nunnehi know of a way to deal with it. The characters are sent to ask them for aid. Given the nunnehi's hatred of the freehold, this is near suicide. The characters better be successful, though, or all of New York City is in trouble!

## FOR VISITORS

- One of the character's kinain is a New York street person and has been kidnapped. The police don't give a damn. Another street person reports that he was grabbed by some red-skinned individuals and dragged into the sewers. As the players research the disappearance, they discover that they are being followed by some shadowy GallainÖ.

- The characters are hired by a wealthy and eccentric sidhe merchant. He recently bought an extremely expensive artifact (a golden water clock) from Goblin Town and says he was swindled. The Goblins claim he got "exactly what he paid for." The characters are sent to negotiate. While they do so, however, both the artist who created the artifact and the merchant are murdered in a grizzly fashion. The characters are blamed and immediately imprisoned by the Goblins. Their only hope is to find the real culprit.







# Chapter Four: Graymere Glen

By Richard Oansky

*"The lake which they inhabit lies not many miles from here, overhung with groves of rime-crustured trees whose thick roots darken the water. Every night you can see the terrible spectacle of fire on the water. No one knows how deep it is."*

—David Wright, translator, *Beowulf*

There is a town that the maps refuse to show. It sits at the end of a road whose name has been forgotten. The paper-thin stones that stand, fragile, in the town graveyard have long been cleansed of the carvings they once bore. An anonymous pond, grayer than Grendel's mere, reflects the brooding buildings that have seen no human occupants for half a century. This was Dudleytown. It is no longer.

There are plenty of souls who think that Connecticut, more than any other place in North America, has been tamed. The insurance industry sprawls over the southern half of the state, casting shadows on the commuters who

scurry to and from New York every day. Further east, the shipyards of the defense firms echo hollowly now that the contracts have gone. A casino on the Rhode Island border turns night into day. To the north, the Interstates carve the land into safe, manageable chunks, while Hartford sits at the center of things, looking to New York and Boston for its cues.

But even this land has two remarkable features. There are the standing stones in Groton, that hold their place in the shipyards' shadows. Strange noises fill the night air in Moodus, a small town that should know to keep its



darkness quiet. And far to the north and west, just out of sight of Cornwall, is an unmarked road that leads to what was once known as Dudleytown.


Settled centuries ago and abandoned again and again, Dudleytown has long been wrapped in a cloak of gloom. There were murders when the first settlers came, and, with later settlers, disappearances. Though tin could be found in the hills north of town, lead was found in the water. Children were born deformed. Madness, an unwelcome visitor, wandered in. The townspeople either died, or went insane. A wise few even left, closemouthed about what they had seen. The population dwindled until, on the day that the census takers came, there was no one there. In 1958, the town was removed from the maps and forgotten by all, save for a few antiquaries and lovers of mystery.

Dudleytown is still a mecca for certain types of humans. College students from UConn, or Wesleyan, or other schools that provide more learning than wisdom, often come in carloads to spend the night in this "haunted" place. To this day, not one of these groups of adventurers has lasted through an entire night. They return to the light of Danbury or Hartford, talking wildly of inhuman footprints sunk into cobblestones or beast-men with yellowed teeth attacking from impossibly thick shadows. No one believes them, of course.

So-called paranormal investigators travel to Dudleytown as well. Trained, prepared, sometimes even armed, they set up their cameras and motion detectors, and settle in for a long night of observation. They never make it until morning, either. Their tales are of "subhuman regressions" and "teratogenic fields," but they are just as far from the truth as the youthful thrill-seekers who precede them. In the end, it is all the same. They are not wanted, not here.

Normal humans left Dudleytown for good in 1957. Now it is just a ramshackle collection of decaying frame houses and older piles of stone and brick. The long and winding road that leads from Route 44 to the town's ruins is no longer paved, but is just a vaguely cleared track of dirt and small rocks. The lake just outside of town is a sullen gray, with a rotting dock collapsing into its waters.

The town proper, or what's left of it, is laid out along a rough grid. Main Street runs straight from the access road north to the lakeside dock, and smaller streets criss-cross it at roughly even intervals. Rusted cars sit abandoned in the streets; willow trees and weeds have grown up through the crumbled pavement. The eastern



side of town has more houses, while the west boasts the wreck of the tin refinery. No doubt the pollution spewed by this industrial monstrosity had much to do with Dudleytown's tragedy.

Main Street is lined with empty shops. The First Western Connecticut Savings and Loan building lingers not three blocks from the lake. There is an empty movie theater as well, the Paradise, the marquee of which boasts proudly that "The Day The Earth Stood Still" is in its last two weeks. The Police Station/City Hall and Fire Department are right in the center of town, where High Street crosses Main, and the lonely wreck of a Congregationalist church stands not quite a block away. On windy days, the church's bell still rings. Sometimes, the sound can be heard as far away as Cornwall; on those days, the residents of that quiet town tend to stay indoors. Not from superstition, you must understand; just prudence.

## Graymere Glen

Dudleytown has been almost completely abandoned since the 1950s. Glamour bubbles up with the lead in the lake just outside of town, but somehow that metal's gray taint has seeped into the wild magic, making it both grimmer and more awful than it ought to be. The Native Americans have long shunned the place, passing their stories on to the European settlers as they came west. Oddly enough, band upon band of settlers actually heeded these warnings, and in so doing they created an image, in their minds and in their stories, of a place that was bizarre and dark indeed. The more people heard the tales, the wilder they became, and the more the legend of the "Dark Lake in the Woods" grew. Thus by the time the Marcowicz brothers actually stumbled upon the place, it was well-saturated with Glamour from centuries of tale-telling. With the town's founding, and the subsequent unfortunate consequences of this, the legend of the place merely grew, and now the Glamour that the lake spits out has the subtle flavor of nightmare.

The effect of this darkened Glamour can be seen on the buildings of the town. Once wood and corrugated tin, they now bear more of a seeming of weathered stone. Close, objective observation will, of course, reveal that they are still comprised of wood and tin, but the impression given by a casual glance is of a town shaped entirely from lead-colored flowstone. Even the remaining windows, tinted the color of clouds running before a storm, seem to sag and bend.

There is one main street in Dudleytown, leading north to a slate-gray dock that sags into the lake. A rowboat, once wood, but now something utterly other, bobs at the end of a rope here, its dragonshead prow snarling lazily over the lake's small waves. The corpses of cars are everywhere, rusting away to show dragon bones beneath. Main Street itself is lined with the ruins of banks and shops, while the eastern half of town boasts the shreds of houses. The tin refinery on the west side of town has collapsed in upon itself, pulling its own walls down with gentle urging from the omnipresent willow trees.

Ah yes, the willow trees. They are everywhere. They line the mere and surround the town, stalking through its streets like a conquering army. Even the road away from this seat of dark magics is lined, like a cathedral entrance, with miles and miles of silent willows, their branches woven together so that no sunlight can reach the rutted road. While no one has ever actually seen the willows walk, every member of the court of Graymere Glen claims that they have turned their back on a tree, only to see it again some distance from where they thought it stood. On the shore of the lake, directly across from the Stone Dock, stands a tree called the Father of Willows. Noticeably larger than the others of his kind in the village, the Father has never been sighted anywhere other than his throne of earth opposite the dock. All of the willow-children's branches droop down toward the earth, weeping. Those of the Father of Willows, however, rise to the skies.

By night the trees and buildings glow softly to fae eyes. The tumble-down ruins cast a dim white light, while the trees tend more toward a sickly gold. The light grows stronger as one approaches the lake, and the Father of Willows himself sometimes blazes so brightly that the hovering clouds reflect his glory. The lake itself, though, does not glow brazenly. In the darkness, it is placid and white, looking for all the world as if it were made of milk.

On Festival nights the surface of the lake changes, becoming solid and smooth as glass. The Kithain dance upon its surface for such occasions, and its glow fills them. Pity the wilder, though, who dares attempt the dance on any other night. The waters are said to swallow up those who dare to touch its surface on a night that is not deemed sacred. It does not matter if one merely touches the surface of the pond with a questing toe. If the lake is disturbed when it does not wish to be, it will drag the offender into its depths forever.

## Graymere Lake

This lake is one of the few remaining natural sources of Glamour in the world. What makes it so remarkable is that it stands so close to civilization; most natural sources of Glamour are hidden far away from mortal eyes. Indeed the lake has its own defenses, in the form of the Schnorrflers, and its own magic, which induces a sort of Bedlam in any mortals who remain within the vicinity. This power has become stronger over the years: the effect, which used to take years to manifest, now appears within hours.

For Kithain, the most significant fact about the lake is that on certain days, mostly Kithain festival days, the surface hardens, and it may be walked upon. In fact, most of the festivals are celebrated on the lake's silvery surface. In addition to the usual festival days, the lake has recently begun to harden on Lady Sascha's Sainday.

Though the lake is seen as a source of great power, it is regarded by most as something of a malignant entity. Any who dare touch its surface on a day not deemed appropriate are dragged beneath its murky surface, never to be seen again. None know the reason for this, though many speculate that a curse was laid on the lake by the nunnehi.

Even the Kithain of Graymere Glen, almost to the individual, do not actually live in Dudleytown. There is too much power there, power that has been subtly twisted so that its wildness cannot be recognized even by the changelings themselves. Most members of the glen's loose court live either in the woods and hills north of town, or in Cornwall, the next town over. The notable exceptions are the pookas Jeremiah and Robin, who dwell in the ruins of the tin refinery, and Lady Sascha, whose mortal existence demands that she occasionally rule in absentee, from New Haven.

The court itself can hardly be called such. Lady Sascha rules, yes, but she is new to power and as yet her rule is based mostly on the consent of the governed. The Graymere itself only permits Kithain with the proper capacity for awe and fear to find it, and while fae of this kind tend to have a flair for obedience, that obedience takes a great deal to command in the face of the lake's quiet glow.

Suffice it to say, then, that the structure of Lady Sascha's court holds, but many of the airs and graces have withered. There is a herald, and the festivals are observed, but the boundary between noble and commoner is blurry. This is a small court, and one which does not promise to grow much larger. As such, the commoners are plucked to fill noble roles, and often find themselves lording it over no one but themselves.

## The Father of Willows and his Children

Legends have long told that, when no one is looking, willows like to pull up their roots and walk. The trees of Dudleytown give lie to that legend, however; they like to stroll occasionally with spectators, at least with fae spectators. They don't walk often, but when they do, they can move as far as a mile at a stretch, eating up ground with long strides. While no one has ever clocked a tree moving, the best estimate maintains that they can reach up to twenty miles per hour. Obviously, the effect is only visible under Glamour, and not all of the willow trees in Dudleytown are capable of such grandiose feats.

While none of the current inhabitants of the glen know the true origin of the mysterious foliage, a few of the local nunnehi do. The willows are part of the incident that initially gave the lake such a bad name among the Native Americans. According to legend, a band of evil spirits were bound into the trees by nunnehi and mortal shamans and set to guard the mere. The legend does not specify the nature of the evil that characterized the intruders, but says only that they were fierce and did not show proper respect for those spirits already in the lands they crossed. Lady Sascha and Sir Denis, in some of their more mundane moments, have actually uncovered certain artifacts of 12th century Scandinavian origin on the edge of the lake; thus, it is entirely feasible that these "evil spirits" were European settlers to whom the local population took a dislike, or perhaps itinerant Get of Fenris who, looking for new lands to conquer, found more opposition than they had bargained for.

In any case, the trees seem to have abdicated their protectorate to the Schnorrflers and instead concentrate on moving in patterns which, when viewed from above, take on the appearance of some great dance. Careful observers will also note that the trees are pulling back more and more from the access road, and are starting to choke the streets of the town. Things are not yet so congested that Lady Sascha has been forced to cut down a wandering willow, but it would seem the time is fast approaching for such measures.

# History


Dudleytown was founded in the 1780s by the Marcowicz brothers, Polish ÈmigrÈ trolls who came to the trackless wilds of western Connecticut to seek their fortunes. What those brothers found was tin, resting near the surface of the rolling hills just to the north of town. They brought their families in, and word of their success drew other miners. Dudleytown soon grew. There was always a high percentage of Kithain among those who traveled the winding willow way, mostly trolls and nockers at first, but later pookas and at least one family that contained the heritage of the fae.

The halcyon early days rapidly faded, though. Mining towns are always rough-and-ready places, and the combination of the town's wild nature and the power seeping out of the poisonous lake created strange chimera that leaped from dreams into the woods around the mere. Appearing as bestial, shaggy men with razored claws and yellow fangs, they were named "Schnorrflers" for the horrible snuffling they made as they shambled through the woods at night. Kithain either avoided the darkened woods or fled into Banality to escape the creatures. These latter Kithain, dimly resentful of the vague remembrance of what they'd given up, turned on those who were once their kin. Tensions grew within the town. There were murders, disappearances, and lynchings.

The town soon earned a bad name, and rumors began to spread that there was something "queer" about the waters of the lake. Still, the tin was there, and where there was tin there were jobs. A new wave of settlers came. Half were families lured by the low price of land, the other half rough types searching for work in the mines. By the end of World War I, there were close to 5000 souls in Dudleytown. They worked the mines, labored in the refinery, served at the restaurants, drank in the bars, and tried to raise their families in normalcy. It was not to be, however. There was lead, as well as power, in the water, and the mortal children were more and more frequently born deformed, or stillborn. A high incidence of madness stalked the town as well, as lead poisoning and Nervosa preyed equally upon the inhabitants. Finally, there were the Schnorrflers.

Enough tales had circulated of "the beast-men of Dudleytown" that they became a self-perpetuating legend. Visiting eshu, even as they were chased out of town for the color of their skin, took note of what lurked in the trees. They spread the tale of the monsters in the woods, and the nightmares of childlings in California gave strength to chimera in Connecticut. No matter that the town's redcap population took to hunting the beasts for sport; there were always more Schnorrflers waiting to take bad little children – or foolish big adults – away.





The population dwindled. In 1944 the tin ran out, and so did Dudleytown's time. One by one, the remaining families left. By 1957, the only sound to be heard on Main Street was the clatter of doors blowing emptily in the wind.

Well, almost the only sound. "Mad Marge," a.k.a. Margrethe Hamilton, a descendant of some of the earliest settlers, refused to go. Her folk had lived in Dudleytown for a century and a half, and she would be damned if some government clerk with a meter and a warning was going to chase her off. So she stayed, and when the census people came round she hid herself and her two sons in the parts of town where few people wanted to venture. Her two boys grew up fey and wild, and when she apologized to Jeremiah and Robin for not being in a place where they could have some friends, Jeremiah just cocked his head oddly and announced, "Don't worry, Mommy. They're coming." Robin would nod and smile then, and Margrethe, worried by nothing she could name, would turn her attention to the problem of their next meal.

Perhaps they were coming, but Margrethe never lived to see them. In 1965 she died of a stroke, leaving behind two pookas just coming to a realization of their potential. Unfortunately, there was no one for Jeremiah and Robin to play their tricks upon. Except, of course, for the Schnorrflers.

Perhaps there had been some fundamental change in the nature of these chimerical beasts, brought on by the fact that those whose dreams reinvented them truly loved Dudleytown. Or, maybe they were just lonely. In any case, the beasts took to Robin and Jeremiah's games, even as they gleefully shredded any who intruded upon Dudleytown's serenity.

This bucolic existence was the norm for too few years. Unknowingly shielded by the power of Graymere Glen, Jeremiah and Robin dwelt in wild splendor. The power of the lake gently redirected those who sought Dudleytown, steering away haughty sidhe and vicious redcaps, and even some of the nunnehi who were gaining strength with the rise of the American Indian Movement (AIM). Those few who were strong enough to bully their way past the lake's suggestions were faced with the ravening Schnorrflers. Jeremiah may have predicted the coming of friends, but for the time being, he and Robin would have to wait. Still, insulated from Banality in a place that even the chilliest of the Autumn People would describe as "weird," they continued to frolic happily.

The explosion of Glamour that came with the opening of the trods in 1969 did not touch Dudleytown directly. In a place so rich with Glamour, what was the addition

of a little bit more from the neighbors? None of the great Houses even remembered this cursed gate. However, the effect of the Accordance War on the glen was not so mild. In early 1970, a motley band of Kithain fleeing from a sidhe attack turned their chartreuse VW van up the access road to Dudleytown. Following them were three state police cars, each containing a pair of heavily armed sidhe warriors. The VW, not meant for such abuse, broke an axle and careened into a row of willow trees. Two of the passengers were slain instantly, and the rest were stunned as the nobles drew close for the coup de grace. Some had already sensed the power in the air here, and idly discussed annexing the area as a holding as soon as the troublesome rabble were dealt with.

It was at this point that the power of the glen reasserted itself. Its gentle defensive weavings now shredded by the desperation of the motley band's need, it summoned its other, more direct means of defending itself. The power called, and the Schnorrflers came. Out of the woods like avenging angels, the furry hordes descended upon the unprepared nobles. Some fled screaming into Banality, while others simply had no time to scream. Horrified, the inhabitants of the van watched as the chimera did their bloody work, convinced that they would be next.

Instead, they faced an entirely different pair of furry faces. Robin and Jeremiah, arguing vehemently over who had seen the company first, opened the one working door left to the van and escorted the survivors to the splendor of Graymere Glen.

For a brief time, all of the survivors of the incident dwelt in the town proper, but the sheer power of the place, combined with Jeremiah and Robin's enthusiasm for jesting with their new friends, made it a difficult domestic arrangement. Eventually they all moved away, some to the woods outside of town, others to the relative hustle and bustle of Cornwall. None moved too far away, however, and all still spent the majority of their time in the glen. This was a practical decision as well as a selfish one, as the sparks and sputters of the Accordance War made safety behind a wall of snarling chimera a very appealing prospect. Dudleytown itself seemed to have acquired a taste for aggression, and those of the sidhe and their servants who attempted to encroach upon the glen's boundaries were often driven off with far more force than was strictly necessary. Even after the cessation of formal hostilities, the Schnorrflers remained an implacable barrier to any of noble blood, Seelie or Unseelie, who wished to enter Dudleytown.

That was, of course, until the coming of Lady Sascha, late in the year of 1992. A graduate student in archaeology at Yale University, Sascha was descended from one of the first families of Dudleytown, one that had carried within it, unrealized, the spark of sidhe blood. Choosing as her specialty the study of modern ruins, she combined her desire to return to her ancestors' home with scholarly ambition and love for her subject. Her powers of command, along with her undisguised love for the town in both the abstract and the real, were enough to crumble the glen's defenses. As she turned her battered red Toyota pickup onto the ragged access road, the Schnorrflers came one by one out of the trees and bowed to her. She drove by, seeing nothing until she parked at the very end of the dock. Then, the Chrysalis took her, and of some things even the whispering willows of Graymere have the dignity not to speak. It is sufficient to say that she came into her power quickly and easily, wearing her noble heritage strikingly well. It should also be said that, as the town and the chimera both accepted her, the freehold's small population soon did as well. Even Robin and Jeremiah eventually bowed to her, though the former did so far more willingly than the latter. The lake itself came all aglow for her Saining, and permitted the new Lady to dance on the waters, alone.

It was impossible for Lady Sascha to stay permanently, of course, though she spends as much time as possible there on "research" for her thesis. While she is present, there is a semblance of formality and dignity, with certain of her unruly subjects doing their best to cloak themselves in fitting decorum. When she goes, social chaos once again seeps in, though surprisingly Robin does his best to maintain order.

As for Graymere Glen's relations with the rest of the Kingdom of the Turtle, on a surface level they are surprisingly good. Lady Sascha has received a dispensation from none other than High King David himself to make Dudleytown her holding, and amnesty has been declared for the "crimes" of 1970. There are still many courts and other places where a resident of Graymere is not welcome, and this coolness is reciprocated by the glen's inhabitants as well. They actively discourage visitors, and several (led by the sluagh Ignatz) have gone so far as to petition Lady Sascha to close the glen to outsiders. She resists this temptation, even as she resists the implacable hatred of those who lost kin at Graymere Glen. One suspects that the lake itself, in its own way, approves of her efforts. If it did not, one suspects that she would not rule for much longer.



## Schnorrflers

Schnorrflers are chimera created originally from the imaginations of the early Kithain settlers of the town. Most of these were of German or Eastern European extraction, and so the stuff of their nightmares was vaguely along the lines of Teutonic and Slavic folktale monsters. The actual name, "Schnorrflers," was given to them by one Anna Ruskova, a childling troll who described the beasts as making ischnorrflingî noises as they paced shaggily through the woods. While Ruskova's powers of description did leave something to be desired, it can be said that the sound the creatures make is a sort of sniffing, growling, gurgling noise for which ischnorrflingî is probably as accurate a description as one is likely to get.

Schnorrflers themselves tend to be between six and nine feet tall, and are covered all over with shaggy brown fur. They have impossibly long arms, and their pawlike hands have curved black claws that are capable of inflicting brutal wounds. Their faces are a curiosity, with sad teddy-bear eyes looking out over hideously wide mouths full of yellow teeth. Oddly enough, they have no noses. Schnorrflers always go naked, though occasionally they adorn themselves with strings of bones or other, less identifiable objects.

In any case, the original form of the Schnorrflers held to this image, and by the time the ethnic makeup of Oudleytown had changed, the image of the Schnorrflers was so thoroughly engraved in the town's subconscious that they became a self-perpetuating institution. Eshu (see above) took the tales of the creatures far and wide, and now the idea of the Schnorrflers is fueled by the dreams and nightmares of Kithain across the world.

An average Schnorrfler will have stats similar to this:

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5, Perception 4, Wits 2, Intelligence 1

Abilities: Brawl 4, Dodge 3, Survival 3, Stealth 3, Melee 1

Glamour: 8, Willpower: 5

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, 5

Powers:

☺ Reality 6 Schnorrflers can make themselves visible to mortals and can even hurt them (chimerically, of course). They are fond of blinking in and out in this fashion while following a party of hikers, creating more and more delicious paranoia in their victims. In order to appear to a mortal the Schnorrfler must roll its Glamour (difficulty equal to the mortal's Banality). Each success allows the Schnorrfler to appear for one minute. Any botch causes the Schnorrfler to become Undone.

# The Denizens of Graymere Glen

## Lady Sascha

A serious student rather than a chaser after the paranormal, Sascha Rominoff first set out to vanished Dudleytown in order to reconcile her quest for her family history with her academic love of archaeology. What she found was beyond her wildest expectations. She believes the lake itself spoke to her during her Chrysalis and told her of her true heritage and destiny. This she keeps very quiet; her hold over some of the freehold's inhabitants is shaky enough as is without their thinking she's drunk a little too much lead-dosed lake water.

Sascha has spent the past year worrying about how she is going to stay in Dudleytown when her academic career ends, and this incessant worrying is actually tainting her with more Banality than her situation would warrant. She is full of ideas about setting up a historical center or a research site, but is aware of the pitfalls of each of these. In the meantime, she worries, and Banality gnaws at her.

**Court:** Seelie

**Legacies:** Saint/Wretch

**House:** Liam

**Seeming:** Wilder

**Kith:** Sidhe

**Physical:** Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

**Social:** Charisma 3, Manipulation 1, Appearance 3

**Mental:** Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

**Talents:** Alertness 2, Brawl 1, Dodge 1, Empathy 3, Expression 2, Intimidation 3, Kenning 4

**Skills:** Drive 2, Etiquette 2, Leadership 4, Melee 2

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 3, Investigation 2, Linguistics 4, Mythlore 5, Occult 3, Politics 2, Science 2

**Arts:** Chicanery 1, Soothsaying 2, Sovereign 4, Wayfare 1

**Realms:** Actor 4, Fae 2, Nature 2, Scene 5

**Backgrounds:** Chimera 3 (a jeweled bird that records all that Lady Sascha says and hears), Dreamers 2, Greymyre 3, Holding 3, Resources 1, Retinue 3, Title 2, Treasure 2

**Glamour:** 9

**Banality:** 6

**Willpower:** 5

**Image:** To mortal eyes, Sascha is a tall, attractive woman with chestnut hair that cascades down to her



waist. There's gypsy heritage somewhere in her face, and most would describe her as "striking" rather than classically beautiful. She often wears sweatshirts and jeans, and prefers comfortable clothing to ornate dress. To Kithain eyes, she is not just striking, but majestic, and a cold fire of command shines in her eyes. Six feet tall in mortal guise, she seems even taller to the fae.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You think too much. When consciously debating your actions, you tend to over-analyze, and consequently get yourself into trouble. In noncrisis situations, waffle. When the situation does become critical, however, your natural talent for commanding emerges. The less time you spend thinking about your decisions, the firmer and the more likely to be correct they are. As weird as it is, Graymere Glen is yours, and you will do whatever you must to defend it, whether this means stringing out your thesis for an extra year or three to buy more time at the glen, or seeding the woods with Schnorrflers to keep the curious away.

Your attitude toward your so-called court is one of affectionate despair. Mostly isolated from the others of your kith and House, you find that your love of Graymere binds you more closely to the commoners you rule than to your supposed equals. Tolerate informality almost to a fault, and always be willing to listen. The final decisions are yours, though, and you are painfully aware of this.



## Robin

Robin is the kinder of the two pooka brothers. A gentle and not terribly bright soul, he genuinely tries to laugh with people, not at them. Unfortunately, he has the comedic timing of a cheese sandwich and the sense of humor of a beached whale, and as such his star is constantly dimmed by the light of his brother's.

Lady Sascha's Herald, Robin was the first to bow to her after her Saining on the waters of the Graymere. The lake itself performed the ritual for the young sidhe, and Robin was the only one brave enough to watch the whole thing. He still gets all starry-eyed when asked about it, but Lady Sascha asked him not to describe it to anyone, and he complies with her wishes. There is a growing rift between Robin and Jeremiah over Lady Sascha, the latter heaping scathing abuse on the former for his slavish devotion to a quote-unquote "sidhe-it." Their fraternal bond has not yet completely eroded, however, and the two still dwell together in the ruins of the old tin refinery.

Both Jeremiah and Robin (not to mention the ageless Ignatz) appear to be far younger than they are. As the twins were born before the town was abandoned, they should be 40 years old, yet they don't look as if they're beyond their teens. Both are stunted in growth, and neither appears to have yet attained full sexual maturity. The best explanation anyone can come up with is that a combination of the Glamour from the lake and the lead in the water is responsible. To date, no one has proposed anything else even vaguely plausible.

**Court:** Seelie

**Legacies:** Wayfarer/Fool

**Seeming:** Wilder

**Kith:** Pooka

**Physical:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

**Social:** Charisma 3, Appearance 2, Manipulation 2

**Mental:** Perception 2, Intelligence 4, Wits 2

**Talents:** Alertness 3, Athletics 4, Dodge 4, Empathy 2, Expression 2, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 1

**Skills:** Brawl 2, Stealth 4, Survival 5

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 2

**Arts:** Chicanery 3, Legerdemain 3, Primal 3, Sooth-saying 1

**Realms:** Fae 3, Nature 3, Scene 4

**Backgrounds:** Chimera 3, Gremayre 3

**Glamour:** 9

**Banality:** 3

**Willpower:** 3

**Image:** Dwelling so close to the lake, Robin is almost never seen by mortal eyes. Those who do see him spot a nearly naked teenager, unwashed and swarthy, with bright eyes and a too-wide smile. In his faerie form he has glowing green eyes, and fuzz has started to creep over his cheeks. His appearance and attitude mimic that of a squirrel, always twitching and squirming. He does in fact have a long bushy tail in fae mien, and he absently twines it around just about anything he can. Barely four feet tall, he moves as if he has four feet (and four legs made entirely of rubber). Robin is generally found nude when Lady Sascha's court is not in session. When it is, he dresses in the best finery he can scavenge. The effect is that of a touching tatterdemalion.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You always mean well, tempering your jokes with mercy (and you have a nagging suspicion your jokes aren't that funny anyway). You think about Mom a lot more than Jeremiah does; sometimes you suspect that he doesn't even remember her at all. Tell jokes, but with Fozzie Bear's delivery and choice of material.

Revel in the first throes of puppy love, which you feel for none other than the Lady Sascha. Admit this to no one, but if she asked for your heart as a tea cosy, you'd hand it over yourself in an instant. When Sascha isn't present, try to keep things the way *she* would like them to be. When she is around, follow her closely but deny that you are doing so.

## Jeremiah

Jeremiah is flat-out nasty. He's all the bad things that Peter Pan's Lost Boys could have turned into, wrapped up in one furry little ball of spite. It's not that he's actively evil. Rather, he's utterly amoral, devoted almost exclusively to his own pleasure. His only noble impulses are directed toward Robin, and with Robin's growing devotion to Sascha, that tie is melting away as well. Jeremiah's anger comes more from the idea that Robin is paying attention to someone else rather than Lady Sascha specifically, but she has become the focus of his malice. On account of this, he has been receiving certain overtures from Lord Denis.

On his brighter days, Jeremiah is a joy to be around, devilishly funny and charming. Most of the time, however, the laughter at his jokes come as much from the relief of those who were not his targets as the humor of the jests themselves.

**Court:** Unseelie

**Legacies:** Fool/Wayfarer

**Seeming:** Wilder

**Kith:** Pooka

**Physical:** Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

**Social:** Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2

**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 5

**Talents:** Alertness 4, Athletics 5

**Skills:** Brawl 3, Dodge 5, Empathy 1, Kenning 3, Subterfuge 4, Stealth 5

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 2, Investigation 2, Mythlore 1

**Arts:** Chicanery 5, Legerdemain 5, Primal 1, Wayfare 1

**Realms:** Actor 3, Fae 3, Scene 4

**Backgrounds:** Chimera 3, Gremayre 3

**Glamour:** 9

**Banality:** 3

**Willpower:** 4

**Image:** Jeremiah, in human form, is utterly indistinguishable from his brother. To Kithain eyes, though, there are subtle differences. Jeremiah is more muscular, and hairier as well. His brother may be the image of the harmless squirrel, but Jeremiah has the predatory visage of the weasel. Disdaining clothes entirely, he is the epitome of the "wild child" image, all feral smile and quick fingers. Where Robin's eyes are green, Jeremiah's are a poisonous yellow.

Jeremiah's chimera are little tarsierlike creatures called "SmooFs" that clamber through the trees wherever he goes. They have soft, round eyes and brown fur, and there are no real claws on their pink paws. They chitter and laugh incessantly, often speaking with human voices, and Jeremiah has discovered that they can serve much

like a remote microphone. What one hears, the others hear as well, and a SmooF in a tree over Lady Sascha can relay what it hears to a SmooF in Jeremiah's hand. Robin, while he is aware of the SmooF's abilities, has not yet put two and two together vis-a-vis what can be done with those powers. Instead, he prefers to play with the SmooFs, and can spend endless hours grooming the chimerical pets.

**Roleplaying Hints:** Be cruel, vicious, and sarcastic, and that's on your good days. The world is nothing so much as raw material for your jokes, and you intend to make the difference between the raw and the cooked very plain. Push things as far as you can with insults, practical jokes, and brutal put-downs, then retreat behind the mask of childish innocence when it looks like your actions are about to catch up to you.

Lady Sascha has nothing but your contempt. For that matter, just about everybody has nothing but your contempt. Sascha is one of the hated sidhe, the other residents of the freehold are intruders on what was your brother's and yours, and Robin, well, he's the worst of all, selling out to that uptight, prissy dictator. In your own twisted way, show your love for Robin by trying to set him back on the "right" path. Of course, this noble effort requires attempting to shatter his devotion to Lady Sascha and he's not buying any of it. Still, he is your brother, and as such deserves one more chance. MaybeÖ

## SIR DENIS MILLARD

A snob descended from an old-money family, Denis Millard is a scion of one of the richest families in Hartford. Denis' father, Marc, was the Lord who instigated the ill-fated attempted drug bust all those years ago, and while he has long since succumbed to Banality and an overabundance of cholesterol, Denis has never forgotten the shame in his father's eyes when he told of that day. Denis' uncle, Matthew, now rules in Marc's stead, but Denis is quite the ambitious wilder.

A Harvard graduate student in archaeology, Denis always kept an eye out for mentions of Dudleytown in academic journals. When Sascha's first paper came to his attention, he immediately wrote to her, praising her work to the skies, attempting to get into her good graces. The plan worked surprisingly well, and eventually she invited him out to the site. Once there he stood revealed in his sidhe nature just as plainly as she, and he has been playing games of romance with her ever since. Under different circumstances his affection might not be entirely feigned, but as things stand, Lady Sascha's destruction, a gift to his late father, is all that Denis holds dear in Dudleytown. He is currently plotting with Jeremiah to bring down the court



of Graymere Glen, but he badly underestimates the little pooka's intelligence. For that matter, Denis suffers from the typical sidhe flaw of underestimating the intelligence of everyone around them. In the end, this may well cost him.

**Court:** Unseelie

**Legacies:** Rake/Courtier

**House:** Fiona

**Seeming:** Wilder

**Kith:** Sidhe

**Physical:** Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

**Social:** Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 4,

**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

**Talents:** Alertness 2, Dodge 2, Intimidation 4, Kenning 2, Subterfuge 3

**Skills:** Drive 3, Etiquette 5, Firearms 3, Leadership 4, Melee 2, Survival 1

**Knowledges:** Computer 1, Enigmas 1, Investigation 1, Law 3, Linguistics 2, Mythlore 2, Politics 4

**Arts:** Legerdemain 2, Sovereign 5, Wayfare 1

**Realms:** Actor 4, Fae 2, Props 4

**Backgrounds:** Chimera 2, Contacts 3, Dreamers 2, Mentor 3, Resources 5, Title 2, Retinue 1, Treasures 2

**Glamour:** 7

**Banality:** 5

**Willpower:** 6

**Image:** Once removed from the mere's effects, Denis is a movie-star handsome man of mixed African and European ancestry. A good two inches over six feet, he is lean and lithe in a way that suggests certain of the larger cats. Always dressed just a little better than the situation might suggest, he has a flair for standing out, effortlessly, from the crowd. To the sidhe (and there are no other Kithain whose opinions he worries about), Sir Denis always appears in richly tailored courtiers' clothes of purple and gold. His classic handsomeness is transformed into an unearthly beauty that seems to be lit from within, and he is always tastefully adorned with gold and jewelry.

Sir Denis has in fact been knighted, and he has demonstrated his prowess at numerous tourneys. Truth be told, he fights dirty, but he looks good (in gold-chased, purple-enameled chimerical plate mail) while doing so. His sword, a thin, bastard-length blade, is also chimerical, and bears the name "Serpent's Tooth." The allusion is not lost on those who know him.

As for Denis' Treasure, it is a simple switch of goldenrod, dried and bound up with grass. When beaten against the ground once, it creates a milk-white chimerical stallion that can outrun the fastest racehorse alive. Should Denis strike the stallion once with the goldenrod, the beast vanishes.

**Roleplaying Hints:** Step by step, slow and sure, this is how you are going to wreak vengeance on the bastards who did such damage to your father's holding all those years ago. Be all smiles for this so-called "Lady" who associates with pooka, sluagh, and, for all you know, farm animals, but never forget that she and hers are going to be paid back in blood. Until the day you can exact your father's revenge, though, it's polite as can be to "Lady" Sascha. Too bad she has to die; she's moderately attractive in a confused sort of way.

Ignore all of the others. They might as well be lawn furniture for all the attention you pay them. If they get the idea you're courting their precious "Lady," so much the better. It'll throw them off the scent of what you're really up to. The only one worth talking to is that bratty Jeremiah, who hates Sascha as much as you do. Still, once his usefulness is at an end, you'll probably have him stuffed and mounted.

## Ignatz

Ignatz runs a well-sequestered (read: hidden and highly illegal) head shop out of his trailer in the woods to the west of Graymere. He's been set up there from time immemorial; some 1920s-era pictures of bootleggers in the local newspaper morgue feature a character who looks suspiciously like a younger Ignatz. A master of arts pharmaceutical, Ignatz commonly receives visitors from colleges as far away as Vassar, UMass, and Brown, and subculture legends of "Wild Man Iggy" have spread his name far and

wide. It is rumored that Ignatz has a small fortune tucked away somewhere in the ramshackle chaos of his trailer, but his real treasure lies in his storehouse of esoteric knowledge.

Ignatz, being far more sociable and communicative than most sluagh, was the one who tipped off the victims of the 1970 raid. He befriended the Schnorrflers long before Robin and Jeremiah did, and occasionally he can get them to obey certain of his requests. Both the growing rift between Robin and Jeremiah and the presence of Sir Denis fill Ignatz with nagging discomfort, but at the moment he doesn't feel he's gathered enough information to act intelligently on the matter.



**Court:** Seelie

**Legacies:** Hermit/Riddler

**Seeming:** Grump

**Kith:** Sluagh

**Physical:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

**Social:** Charisma 3, Manipulation 5, Appearance 1

**Mental:** Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

**Talents:** Alertness 5, Dodge 3, Empathy 4, Expression 2, Intimidation 2, Kenning 4, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 2

**Skills:** Firearms 2, Security 3, Stealth 3, Survival 4

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 4, Law 2, Medicine 4, Occult 2, Politics 1, Science 2

**Arts:** Chicanery 2, Primal 4, Soothsay 4, Sovereign 2, Wayfare 2

**Realms:** Actor 2, Fae 2, Nature 4, Prop 2, Scene 5

**Backgrounds:** Chimera 2, Contacts 5, Dreamers 5, Gremayre 3, Resources 4, Treasures 3

**Glamour:** 7

**Banality:** 7

**Willpower:** 7

**Image:** To the un-Glamoured eye, Ignatz is one more drug-crazed ex-hippie, trying to cling to the '60s when '80s nostalgia is all the rage. His hair is frizzed out in nine million different directions, and his beard leaks down nearly to his knees. His eyes are bright and blue, though opinions vary as to precisely which of Ignatz's pharmaceutical concoctions produces this effect. Stooped, bent, and withered with age, Ignatz looks to have survived this long merely so that he could point to himself in crowd scenes during screenings of the film *Woodstock*. Kithain see not so much withering but wizening, however, and those bright eyes are large as saucers to their vision. In faerie form, Ignatz is much less amusing and far more terrifying, for there is no escape from his gaze anywhere in Dudleytown. His thin arms are corded like tree branches; the ends of his long, thin fingers are tipped with wicked black claws. While he still wears tatters, these are the shreds of ancient finery, and all of his clothes are the color of dried blood. From the woven leather belt at his waist hangs a mortar and pestle of what he claims is chimerical silversteel, and which purifies any substances ground within it.

Some travelers who have met him have openly compared Ignatz to the legendary Fir Darrig, or Red Man, of Irish legend. The fae have legends of this character as well, which identify him as a malicious trickster with a taste for blood and sorrow. While Iggy himself is no fan of violence, his appearance and his taste for the nasty practical joke have made enough people wonder that he is starting to draw attention from very lofty circles indeed. The mere mention of the legend around Iggy is enough to drive him into a rage, but that doesn't keep people from talking once they've left his trailer. Ignatz's Treasure is a rhinoceros horn, which under Glamour transmogrifies into the horn of a unicorn. This is extremely useful for one in Iggy's line of work, as it turns purple when exposed to any poisonous mixtures. It also has limited healing abilities, in that if laid on the breast of a poison (or overdose) victim, it will purify their blood and drive the poison out. It can only perform that function once per day, but it's a cold day in Hell indeed when Iggy lets more than one person OD on his doorstep.

**Roleplaying Hints:** So they think you're crazy? Mebbe they don't think you're crazy enough! Be wild, ramble, drool, and quote extensively from Kerouac. Then, just when everyone's decided you're utterly loony, give 'em a wink and let 'em know that some of it is an act. Just how much, well, that's for them to figure out. More to the point, that's for them to worry about.

Use your rep as a drug-addled old man to your advantage. People will talk a lot more freely in front of someone they consider to be harmless. Gather information, yes, but

## Iggy's Magic Voodoo "Oh-My-Lord-It's-A-Comin'-For-Me" Potions, Mushrooms and Wacky Tobacky

In addition to producing normal hallucinogens and whatnot for his discerning clientele, Iggy also prepares recreational pharmaceuticals for Kitchain. He maintains several garden plots right on the lake's shore for his mushrooms, cannabis sativa, and other herbal dependents, letting them suck up Glamour along with lake water. As might be expected, even after Iggy's preparations, drugs made from those plants tend to produce effects that can only be described as wild.

While there is no set response to one of Iggy's "special" potions (or joints, or mushrooms, or whatever), the effects tend to fall into three major categories: playing games with Glamour, the creation of chimera, and just plain weirdness. The first is the easiest to identify, as Iggy's products often result in wild fluctuations in temporary or even permanent Glamour. A bad trip can strip a Kitchain of all temporary Glamour, leaving them alone and defenseless even as the hallucinations continue. On the other hand, some lucky changelings find themselves suddenly aware of the beauty in a particular piece of plywood, or the carapace of a beetle, or their own hands even, and as such find their temporary Glamour scores skyrocketing.

The second effect, the creation of chimera, is reasonably self-explanatory. There are things besides Schnorklers wandering in the woods now, and Iggy's more or less responsible for all of them. As for effect number three, well, suffice it to say that anything can and has happened under the influence of Iggy's "Specials." Footprints that glow, eyes that wander randomly around faces, the loss of ten years of age or the growth of an extra set of arms— all of these have been known to occur. While effects of this sort are relatively rare, they happen often enough to have helped spread Iggy's legend far and wide.

On a final note, Ignatz claims to have never given a Special to a mortal. In this he is in fact lying. He doesn't bother labeling most of his Specials, suspecting (rightly) that any attempt to organize such things would weaken their power. As such, mortals who get one of Iggy's Specials all have remarkably similar trips, which usually involve seeing fairies all over the place. Veterans of the hallucinogenic scene, particularly those who have already taken a trip on the Glamour mushroom express, merely regard this as proof that Iggy does in fact make the best stuff around.



not just for its own sake. You've got an agenda (keeping the flame of the '60s alive, protecting the glen, putting a ski pole sideways up the butt of authority), and every move you make is a step on the path to achieving these ends. Never forget what forced you to hide out in the woods (actually, you have forgotten it, but feel free to make up three or four wild stories, all mutually contradictory, that you share with the players), and treat Banality like it's a personal insult. Oh yes, and make a profit on your little chemical concoctions, too. Ain't never been a revolution that didn't need money, and you're personally going to make sure that the next one's well funded.

### Heather

Though the 1970 chase was a seminal event in Graymere Glen's history, eventually most of the participants moved away and succumbed to Banality. Heather is the child of two such, who took up residence in Cornwall as the proprietors of a restaurant and gradually let all dreams of their wilder days and mad excursions vanish. Heather,

a precocious child, helped out around the restaurant's kitchen from the time that she was barely old enough to walk, and gradually discovered in herself a stunning talent for cooking and baking. She also had in her much of the wildness that had marked her parents' younger days, and dimly, they smiled to see it.

Part of that wildness took the form of day trips and rambles in the local woods, and these inevitably led her to the ruins of Dudleytown. She was nine when she saw her first Schnorrfler, old enough to doubt what her eyes told her, and her experiences in the fae realm were spotty and intermittent for years. It was not until she quit college, came home, and opened a gourmet bakery out of her parent's back kitchen that she came to truly accept the possibilities of what she'd seen way back when.

Heather's role in the dynamics of Dudleytown is ambiguous. Everyone loves her, even Jeremiah, but at various times they've all wished she would go away and mother someone else. Still, it is Heather that Lady Sascha turns to for counsel on delicate matters in the glen. She watches Lady Sascha's blossoming romance with Sir Denis with a matchmaker's delight (despite the fact that she had nothing to do with it) and is completely taken in by Denis' charm. She despairs of Ignatz, due in large part to his habit of calling her "Flat Janis." She never turns up at the glen without at least one large batch of cookies.

**Court:** Seelie

**Legacies:** Crafter/Scrooge

**Seeming:** Wilder

**Kith:** Boggan

**Physical:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

**Social:** Appearance 2, Charisma 3, Manipulation 2

**Mental:** Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

**Talents:** Alertness 1, Empathy 4, Expression 2, Kenning 2, Streetwise 2

**Skills:** Crafts 5 (cooking), Drive 1, Enigmas 3

**Knowledges:** Medicine 2, Mythlore 1

**Arts:** Chicanery 1, Primal 2, Soothsay 2,

**Realms:** Nature 3, Actor 5, Fae 1

**Backgrounds:** Chimera 1, Contacts 1, Dreamers 3, Resources 2

**Glamour:** 7

**Banality:** 3

**Willpower:** 4

**Image:** More of an "earth big sister" than an "earth mother," Heather is a radiantly cheerful, earth-tones kind of person. Though not more than an inch over five feet, she still gives an image of rock-solid strength. Weighing in at a little over 170 pounds, she refuses to bow to the winds of fashion, and in fact she generally wears a well-

worn apron bearing the legend "Someone's Cooking Now." Ignatz once described her as "what Janis woulda looked like if someone had stepped on her," and it's hard to disagree. Her boggan visage is, if possible, even shorter and rounder, emphasizing the strength in her hands and the laughter in her eyes. Jeremiah claims that her coke-bottle glasses have been spot-welded to the back of her head, and he's got the bruises to prove he's tried to check out this theory.

**Roleplaying Hints:** There are no impossible problems, only people unwilling to put nose to grindstone to solve them. Your wit is tart, but never malicious, and everything you say or do is intended to help people better themselves. Constantly fiddle with things to set them right. If you see an untied shoelace, tie it. If you see a bit of food at the corner of someone's mouth, dab it away for them with the corner of your apron. Demonstrate with every word how happy you are with yourself, but always be concerned for others who aren't as lucky as you are. Start sentences with "Now now now..." and "I know it's not my place to ask, but..." frequently. If someone refuses your help, take it with good grace. There'll be plenty of opportunities later on, and you can always help them without their knowing it.



## Europa

A wanderer, Europa (the name is one she took herself, and she relishes the irony) has already lived enough for a dozen people. A dabbler in modern dance, singing, songwriting, mime, and magic, she's performed on street corners from Harvard Square to Haight-Ashbury. But the streets are getting a little mean for her, and the winds are a

little colder than they used to be, and one day she decided to take a break from it all. Her rusted Volvo sits on Main Street, barely distinguishable from the automotive corpses around it, but somehow it gets her to renaissance fairs and festivals all over the East Coast. She claims to be a friend of authors, dancers, singers, and all sorts of famous folk, and has produced evidence to this effect on the rare occasions when she's been challenged.

Europa is getting a bit tired of the road's incessant grind, and is considering settling down for a while. Her current plan, no more than half-formed, involves running a community arts center. Cornwall looks appealing to her, both for its relative isolation and for its nearness to Graymere. The glen's other residents have no inkling that she's contemplating settling down, and are merely glad she's there as often as she is. She sees through Denis in that she recognizes how false he is, but she doesn't realize the depth of his malice. For the moment, she is content to let Sascha work out her romantic disasters for herself.

**Court:** Seelie

**Legacies:** Orchid/Peacock

**Seeming:** Wilder

**Kith:** Eshu

**Physical:** Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4

**Social:** Charisma 4, Appearance 4, Manipulation 2

**Mental:** Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

**Talents:** Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Dodge 3, Brawl 2, Kenning 4, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 1, Expression 5

**Skills:** Performance 5, Stealth 3, Security 2, Survival 3, Drive 2, Firearms 1

**Knowledges:** Law 2, Mythlore 2, Occult 2, Politics 2

**Arts:** Chicanery 4, Legerdemain 2, Primal 1, Soothsay 3

**Realms:** Actor 3, Fae 3, Nature 3, Scene 1

**Backgrounds:** Chimera 3, Contacts 4, Dreamers 4, Gremayre 3, Resources 1, Treasures 2

**Glamour:** 8

**Banality:** 6

**Willpower:** 5

**Image:** A slender woman with head half shaved, Europa claims at times to be part Native American, part African, part Asian, and at least half Jewish. Her beauty is exotic enough that any or all of her claims could be true; her almond eyes, high cheekbones, and cafe-latte complexion speak of a wildly diverse ancestry. She often dresses in ragged, baggy clothes, which conceal her form from all but the most intent ogler. Her walkman appears to have been surgically implanted, and she moves to whatever melody is currently pouring through its headphones.

When seen in her eshu form, Europa's beauty becomes even more exotic, and Robin swears that her skin actually glows, softly. Her eyes lose their pupils, becoming a solid, velvety black. While she smiles frequently, Europa's smiles rarely show her teeth. On the occasions when they do, even Ignatz ducks for cover.

Europa is fond of pulling chimerical knives, usually flame-bladed, from various portions of her costuming. She typically wears black velvet or silk, marked with a crimson sash that can hold a trio of blades. She invariably goes barefoot, and rarely leaves footprints where she walks.

In addition to her knives, Europa has a chimerical talking drum which, when asked questions in a sufficiently polite manner, sometimes responds while she is playing it. The drum is of some nameless dark wood, and close inspection of the drum head reveals that the leather came from no earthly beast. Then again, few people are likely to get that close to Europa, or her drum.

**Roleplaying Hints:** On the knife-edge between wilder and grump, you're getting a bit tired of the road. Graymere seems a good enough place, with few rules and fewer people, for you to settle down for a while until the traveling bug bites you again. You've been realizing lately, though, that you're not sure that you want it to bite. This worries you.

Never answer a question directly when you can spin a story that illustrates the same effect but takes twice as long; never use one word where a hundred will do. You don't intentionally wrap others in your mystery, but you secretly find it pleasing that they're all drawn in by you anyway. Take attention to your words as nothing less than your due, and woe betide anyone who dares interrupt you.



## Story Ideas

- A band of Unseelie raiders trash Ignatz's place in search of his rumored stash. The characters, on their way to see "Wild Man Iggy" for purposes of their own, are corralled by him into hunting down those responsible. With the perpetrators still in the woods somewhere near the glen, the players must reach the defilers before the ravaging Schnorrflers do, or before the chimera mistake them for the perpetrators. And why does Sir Denis keep sending them off in the wrong direction... ?

- The players are driving cross-country on Highsummer Night when the driver of their car sees a huge furry beast come out of the woods and onto the road. Not surprisingly, they crash, and the last thing they see is a pooka wilder laughing at them. They awaken later in Graymere to the sight of strange Kithain, including (they think) the pooka

who took such delight in their accident. Can the players uncover what really happened? Will they turn the entire freehold against them in their quest for the truth? Robin will cover for Jeremiah until the ends of the earth, and Jeremiah will encourage such behavior, but is Jeremiah the one for whom Robin should be covering, or is there something more sinister afoot?

- Sir Denis is not unknown to the players; they had the misfortune of incurring his displeasure at a Pennons festival in the recent past. As new arrivals in Dudleytown, they see through his machinations, but he holds Lady Sascha's ear and has her convinced that their accusations are merely sour grapes. Can the other members of Sascha's court be rallied to her aid, and will the truth be revealed before Denis steps up his timetable and wreaks his father's vengeance on the freehold?



# Chapter Five: Florist Primaeval

By Allen Tower

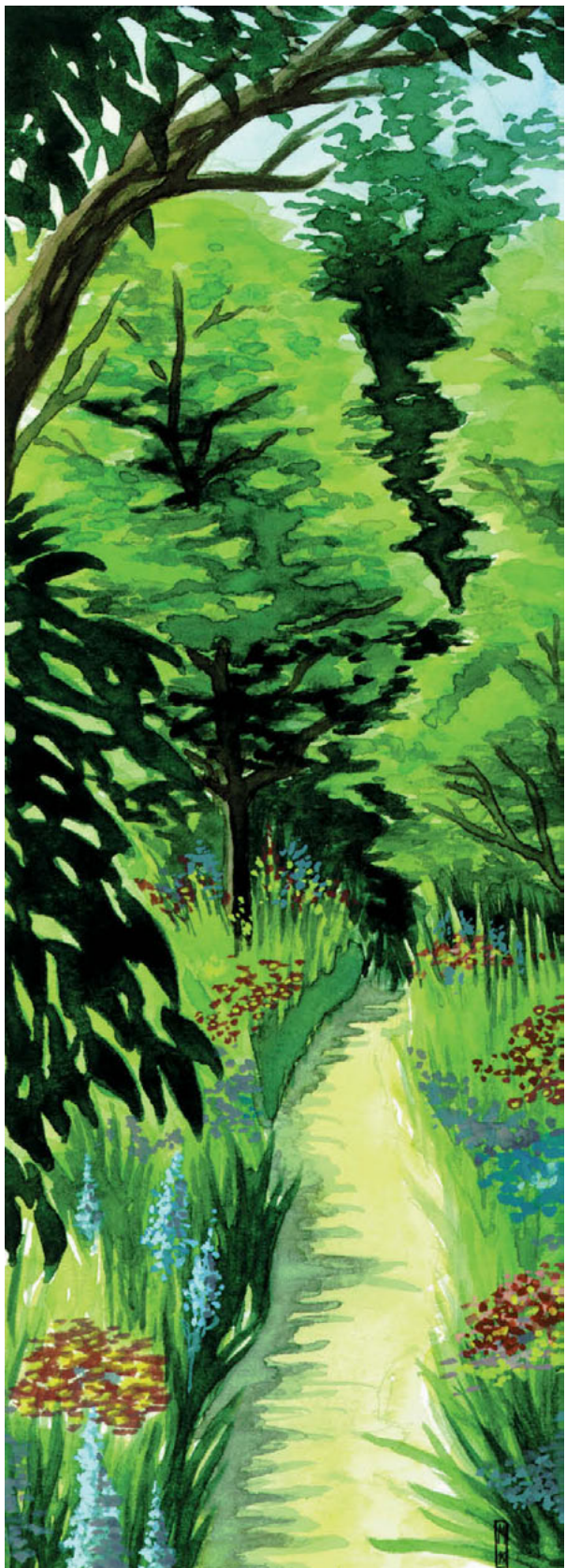
Savannah, Georgia. The name conjures images of vacationers, a bustling port city, and stately remnants of an era long since past. While pirates and privateers once called it home, “magical” and “mysterious” are no longer words that are readily associated with the city. However, near the Savannah River in the old part of town, there lies a secret, a haven, hidden in the darkness of plain sight. Surrounded by lush, luxuriant hedges, Florist Primaeval is a verdant island within the concrete confines of the city.

## Florist Primaeval

Surrounded on all sides by thick and well-maintained hedges (which conceal a sturdy chainlink fence), very little of the glen is visible from the street. Only the tops of large oaks, draped with wisteria and Spanish moss, hint at what might lie within. The street entrance is a gate of wrought iron, with the name, Florist Primaeval, etched into the scrollwork. If one peers through the gates, as scarce a casual passerby is wont to do, no structures are immediately visible. Rather, one is struck by the seem-

ingly patternless abundance of flora. The drive curves to the right, as if to avoid the flowering weeping willow. A particularly astute observer might notice, barely visible between the branches of the willow, a small building, almost a cottage, deep within.

For whatever reason, it seems that visitors and customers rarely, if ever, enter the gates. Should a first-time visitor wander under the iron arch, her senses would be assaulted by the sheer bounty within. Flowers and blooms of every color, plants of every shade of green natural to that part of the world, and tall oaks that cast cool, inviting shadows fill the vision. A melange of scents, from the moist, loamy smell of a mossy bank, to the heady perfume of a thousand blossoms, threaten to overwhelm the visitor. The soft susuration of water, the gentle rustling of countless trees and shrubs, the chattering of squirrels and the muted sounds of birdcalls all combine to form a natural symphony, the meaning of which lies just beyond the reach of the conscious mind. The sense of leaving Savannah behind is surprising in its completeness, and more than a bit discomfiting to some.



Once the visitor's senses have recovered, details begin to filter in. A testament to its design, one cannot escape the impression that the grounds are much larger within than without. Directly ahead is the weeping willow, forcing the road to bear to the right. The mossy base of the tree practically begs for one to sit and forget one's troubles. A small pond dominates the center of vision, surrounded by narcissus and lilies. It is fed by a quietly babbling brook which must be artificial, though it appears to be more natural than any other an observer can readily recall. To the left, a small hill rises; at its crest stands a majestic oak, which spreads its limbs and shade almost protectively over a small group of rose bushes. The roses themselves grow into the hedges on this side of the fence, the boundary between the world outside and the serenity within. To the right, the drive gently meanders around small hillocks, dotted with clover and heather, until it comes to rest before a rather small and oddly fitting cottage.

This is the central office of Florist Primaeval, as well as the home of Douglas Biggins, its main caretaker. The interior is neat and simple, and seems almost plain after the excess that surrounds it. The front room, which takes up nearly half of the cottage, is a spacious reception area, though for all appearances it has been some time since it has seen very many customers. To the back is a small kitchen, a Spartan bedroom and a small bath. A stone porch frames the rear of the cottage, and faces a gabled, ivy-cloaked, two-story house, which stands surrounded by violets, daffodils, and white roses.

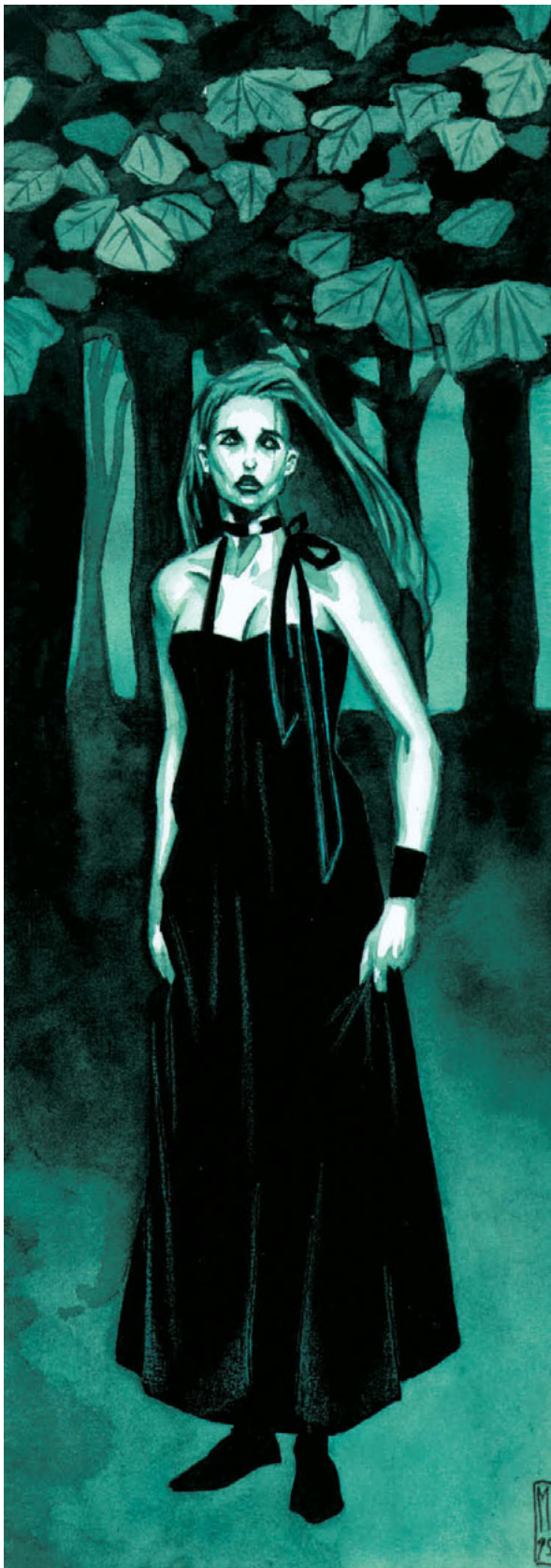
This is the home of Lady Una Laurence, built for her by her adoring mortal husband Arthur. Inside, it is spacious and airy, with tall ceilings and carefully placed windows, allowing for both maximum light and a broad view of the surrounding flora. The furniture and decoration reflect Una Laurence's fae aesthetic: antiques chosen for appearance and comfort as opposed to price and value; Romantic, impressionistic portraits and landscapes; and in every room some type of plant life. The delicate scent of seasonal flowers fills the house, the individual fragrance varying from room to room. Members of the household dwell on the first floor; the second is reserved for Lady Una and the memory of Arthur. From the cupola window of the master bedroom, the entirety of the latter portion of the garden is visible. A small drying shed adjoins the back of the house, forming the western border of an herb garden. Further to the west lies an unfinished hedge maze. Only the perimeter and the southern portion have been planted, though there are some signs (markers, stakes, and tools) that its completion is underway. A diminutive gazebo sits atop a slightly elevated hillock to the east; the surrounding foliage has been planted and trimmed

in such a way as to ensure that the site is illuminated by the first rays of the sun.

To the north, a peculiar, glass-roofed stone building fills the small hollow between a circle of hills crowned by oaks. It seems unlikely that a casual observer would notice anything unusual here; the oaken canopy provides year-round camouflage, mistletoe filling the spaces left by autumn's passing. The short hills themselves cradle the structure, making it all but invisible. A dedicated searcher, or someone who knows what they're looking for, would find a narrow path to the west that weaves between the living columns, opening before a heavy, dark wooden door. An ornate yet functional brass lock secures it from the casually curious, and inlaid on its panels is an intricate design of stylized orchids. This is the door to the orchid house. Within, the air lies hot and heavy, and clings moistly to the skin. Movement is somewhat akin to swimming; languor seems inescapable here. The plants themselves are in various stages of bloom. Flowers of every color, even the rare black orchid, have been planted in abundance, and apparently at random; the effect is oddly pleasing, though perhaps also somewhat distracting. It is as if a pattern exists that cannot be immediately discerned. Toward the back, behind the miniature palm stand, is a large earthen kiln; the fire within is clearly visible. Judging from the inconspicuous pipes that extend out from it, as well as the increase in temperature as one approaches that corner of the room, it is fair to assume that this is the heat source for the tropical microcosm.

To Kithain, everything about Florist Primaeval is vibrant and alive. Colors are hyperreal, and individual scents can be distinguished from the perfumed air. In contrast to the discomfort and uneasiness that mortals feel, the Kithain experience an immediate sense of belonging. This feeling grows stronger the greater a character's Gremayre rating; the garden reflects bits and pieces of Arcadia, and can instill a feeling of nostalgia in even the most hardened Kithain heart. Everything begs, demands to be experienced.

Aimless wandering will eventually lead to the orchid house; anyone with sufficiently high Kenning will feel the invisible tug of Glamour from this direction, though it permeates the entire area. Within the orchid house, sensation is all the more vivid. The warm, heavy air seems to embrace the Kithain, offering succor from the cold chill of the banal world. The warm glow of balefire flows from the earthen kiln and casts long shadows that seem almost alive. Here there is safety. Glamour is abundant, and though capricious, is tinged with a touch of resolute sadness and bittersweet yearning.



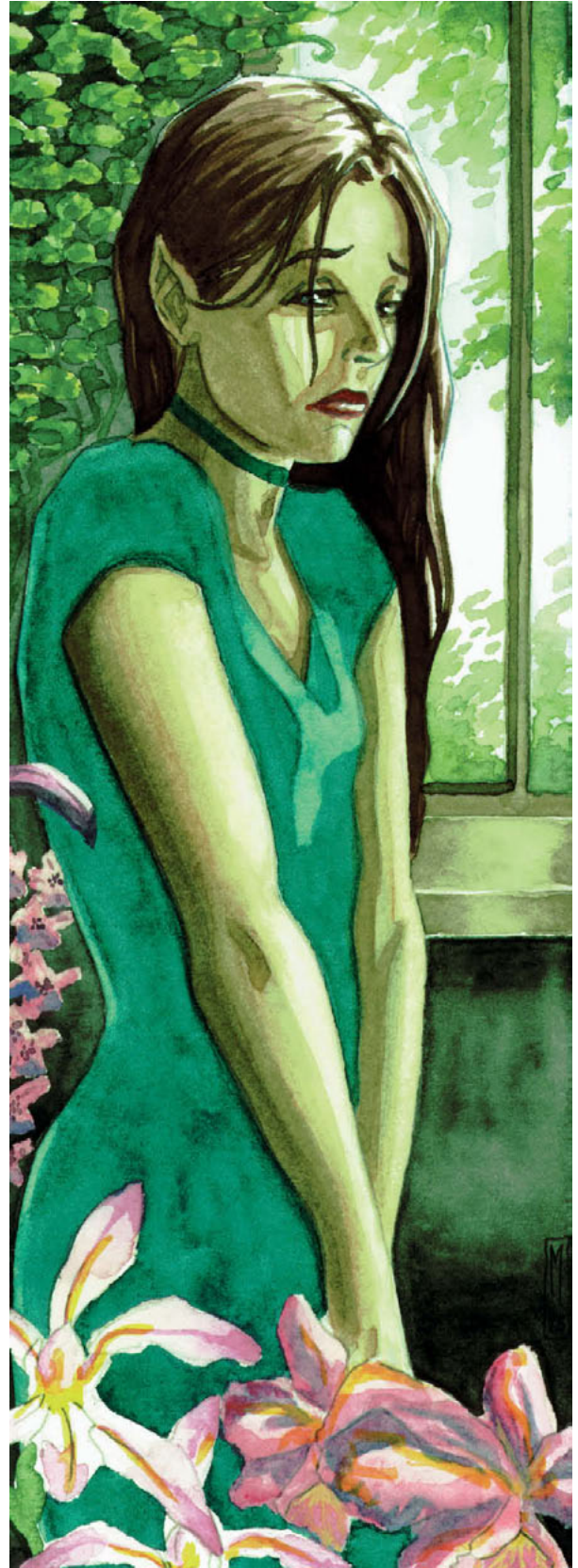
## History

The grounds and structures of Florist Primaeval were largely shaped by mortal hands. Arthur Laurence began to build this home as a tribute to his beloved wife; later, it became his singular obsession. The tragic history of this freehold parallels the equally unfortunate life of its Lady, Una Laurence.

In the springtime of their love, Arthur began to make the dreams of his adored Una a reality. As a testament of his love and appreciation, he built her a home he believed she would cherish, inspired by her own vision. The two-story house was an unqualified success, a fragment of Arcadia made real. Una was greatly touched, and he was unabashedly pleased to bring her such happiness. Unfortunately, Arthur was blind to the pain she suffered at this physical reminder of all that was lost. Despite their abundant pleasure in one another, the seeds of despair and estrangement were born, and over time took root in fertile ground.

Though their love was true, the duality of Una's life slowly became an ineffable chasm between them. Upon every occasion that she determined to confide in Arthur, a dark capricious mood would come over her, and she would remain silent. It seemed as if Arthur knew that something was wrong. In an attempt to remedy the growing silence within Una, he began to transform their home into a garden that reflected all of his skill and vision. To his credit, he succeeded admirably, yet each new success only caused Una more sadness. Her home came to remind her all the more of her beloved and lost Arcadia, and she spent many hours in solitary, wandering contemplation. She appreciated the effort Arthur was making, and loved him all the more for it, but it only caused the distance between them to grow ever greater.

Thinking that perhaps Banality was creeping in upon her, she made her only request to Count Morrig, the ruling noble of Savannah and its environs; she asked that he allow her to establish a freehold on her property. To the surprise of many, he agreed. Una cloaked this project from her unaware husband with a subtle deception. She cultivated an interest in orchids, knowing that such delicate and temperamental plants were beyond his expertise. Arthur encouraged this diversion, silently hoping that it would fill whatever mysterious needs were consuming her. When she secured her own contractors and builders (artisans in the employ of the count), he readily agreed. Una spent a great deal of time in the orchid house, and for a while it

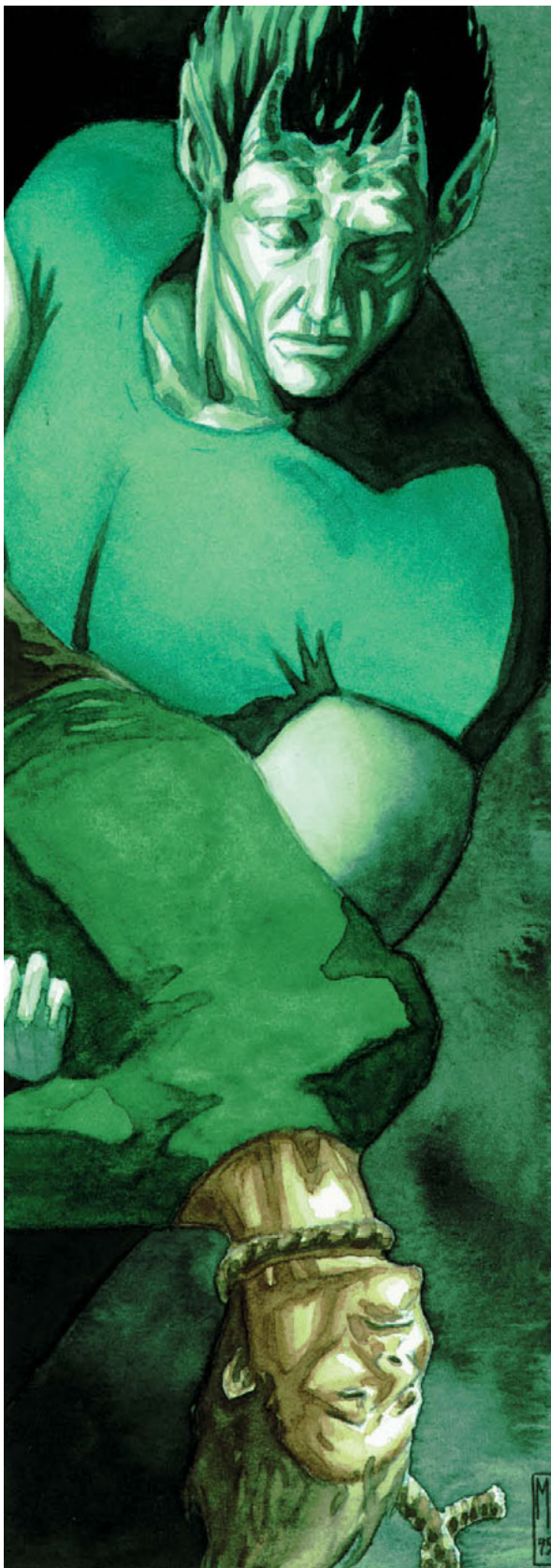


seemed to heal her. Sadly, as she spent more and more of her time there, away from Arthur, the distance between them began to grow.

Miscommunication, fed by Una's perverse silence, provided fertile sustenance for their growing dissatisfaction. Arthur became like a man possessed; he contracted much of his remaining work out to grateful competitors, and devoted increasingly more time to the transformation of their home. His work was more brilliant than ever, but he could not see it. His only concern, indeed, his obsession, was to create an environment that would return his beloved wife to her once smiling and happy self. Concerned that her husband was overworking himself, Una began to select retainers who were willing to work alongside Arthur and never reveal their fae nature. The first and most stalwart of these was a troll wilder named Douglas Biggins. Douglas took on the few remaining commercial obligations, leaving more time for Arthur to work on the garden. Completing the garden seemed to be Arthur's only concern, and he worked at it feverishly. One morning Douglas found the remains of this once vibrant but now shattered man hanging by a length of rope from an oaken branch, his feet tapping the door of the orchid house. Arthur was laid to rest at the base of the weeping willow, so that he might see all who enter or leave his treasured garden.

The hedge maze, the only unfinished section of the garden, is forbidden to all save Una. She sometimes wanders there late at night; always she is quietly despondent when she returns. Some have reported having heard her speak, as if to another, during these walks; Douglas' stony countenance, however, put an end to such gossip quickly enough. Twyla swears that she has seen a misty, indistinct figure prowling the garden late at night, but most attribute this to a pooka prank. Both Douglas and Garrett have made it clear that such talk is tantamount to insulting Una, and unwelcome in their presence.

Due to Douglas' silent diligence, Florist Primaeval has retained its few customers, and they are willing to pay handsomely for the unique style of gardening it offers. Una insists that laborers be hired according to need and willingness to work, though the majority of their duties are maintenance. Even customers seem reluctant to enter the garden; most orders are placed by phone. It is rare that a human passes through the wrought-iron gates.



# The Household

Not all of the residents are permanent members of the household. Florist Primaeval has recently been opened to visitors, mostly due to the influence of Twyla and Douglas, and it is possible to encounter any of the fae inhabitants of Savannah on the nursery's grounds.

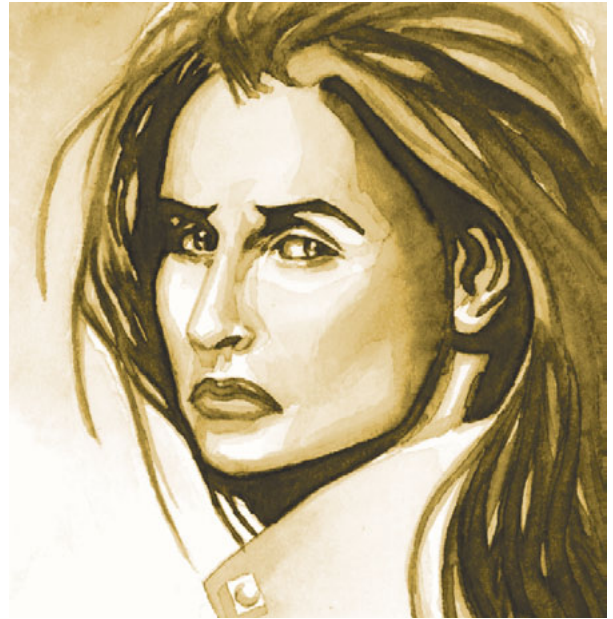
## Una Laurence/Lady Una Morrowind

Lady Una, cast out of Arcadia in 1969, came to a very different Earth than the one of fae memory. The reasons for her exile have been forgotten, a casualty of the Mists, but it is known that her exile was neither inhumane nor haphazard; Una replaced a mortal girl, Martine Jenkins, so that she would have some protection from Banality. That summer, Martine had a nervous breakdown; for days she seemed dazed, apparently responding to things that weren't there, speaking of fantastical events, and sobbing inconsolably. Her parents never considered professional help. Once they were certain that her condition wasn't drug related, they did what they thought was best; they gave her time and love. It seemed to do the trick, and Martine slowly returned to her senses, though she was never quite the same.

For Una, the exile was particularly harsh. She was young, and had endless summers of pleasure and romance ahead of her. To be cast suddenly into the role of a quiet human teenager from suburbia was almost more than she could bear. If not for the obvious concern the Jenkins' showed the girl they thought to be their daughter, she would have forgotten all. Instead, she resolved to make the best of it; a world in which parents so cared for their children could not be irredeemable.

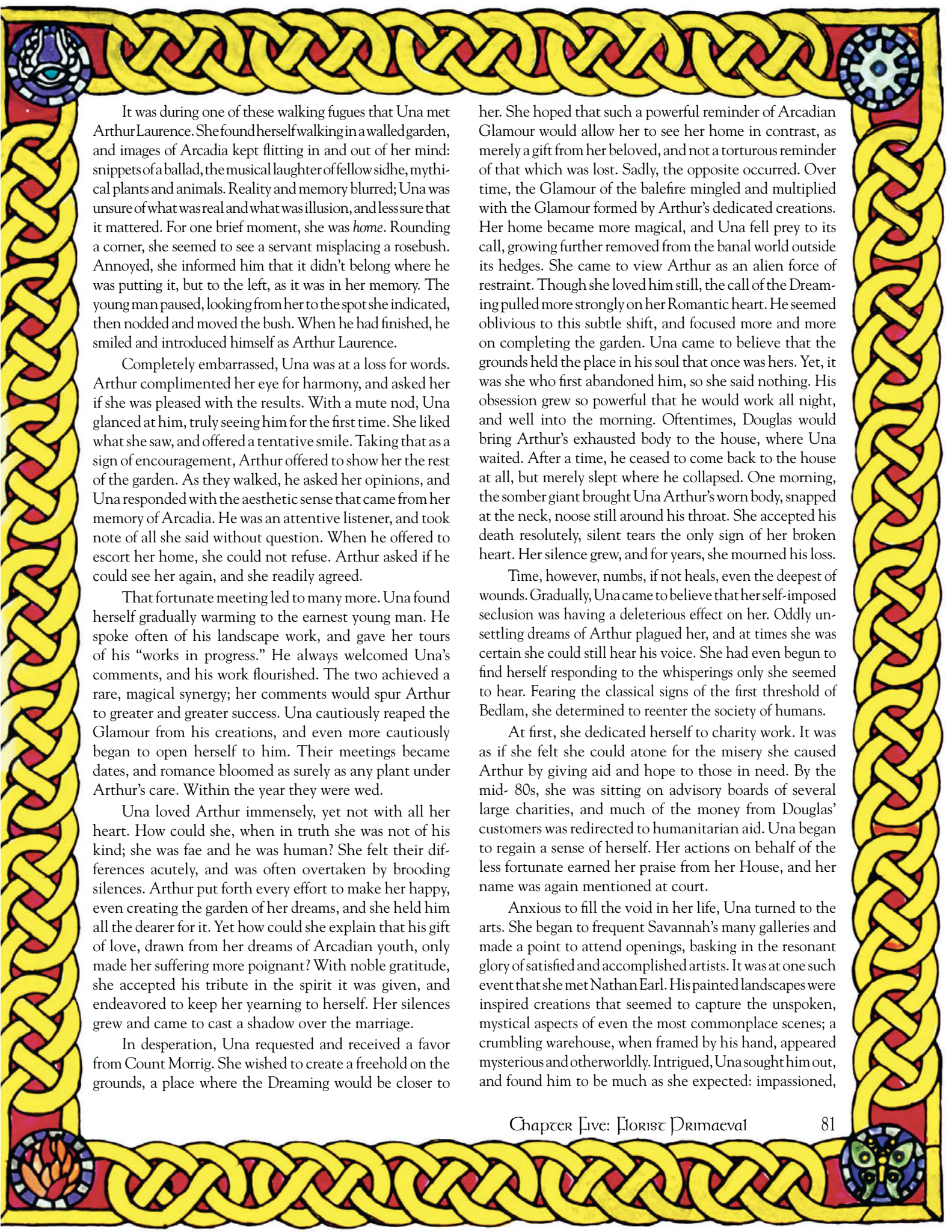
In the following year, Una (an affectation her parents were willing to grant her) threw herself into her studies. She greeted every subject with enthusiasm, as if it were a new discovery. The arts drew her like a moth to flame, although, surrounded only by high school artists, it was easy to starve for Glamour. Still, the improvement in her grades and attitude won her admission into the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD).

To mortal eyes, her first year was peaceful and serene, save for one "minor" incident. A seemingly innocuous school outing to Fort Pulaski turned into a harrowing gauntlet for Una; she became separated from her group, and it turned out that a small band of nunnehi were in the area. During the five hours she was "lost," Una was taunted and harried across the historical sight, driven further and further from the safety of human company.



Her flight, however, was not without purpose. Using the Arts of Primal and Soothsay, Una learned the lay of the land, and worked this to her advantage. She also discovered a hidden cache of weapons and cold iron, brought by "the dark ones," according to the trees. So armed, she hid herself in the hollows of the dunes and made her stand. The nunnehi, not expecting any serious resistance, fled, carrying their wounded, as Una assailed them with cold iron-tipped arrows. Surviving such an attack, as well as uncovering weapons that were presumably intended for foul purposes, won her much fame, as well as the favor of Baron Morrig's court. Some say that the Baron's exposure of the Shadow Court's assassination attempt on Elena, duchess of the southern coast, can be attributed in no small part to Una's initial discovery. There is neither confirmation nor denial of this scenario, though the baron, now Count Morrig, holds great esteem for Una.

In her early years at SCAD, Una kept herself close to the center of the arts scene, though she was never a direct contributor. Soon, her attachment to artists and their eventual successes earned her the nickname "Muse." When she learned of this, however, Una withdrew, fearing that she had made her Reveries too obvious, and began to cultivate solitude. Long walks became a regular ritual for her. Her cloak of alienation protected her, and after a while the nickname faded; but her withdrawal had another, more unexpected effect. When unoccupied, Una began to have visions, almost waking dreams, of the aching beauty of lost Arcadia. It became a vicious, melancholy circle; the self-imposed loneliness fed the longing, and the longing fed the loneliness.



It was during one of these walking fugues that Una met Arthur Laurence. She found herself walking in a walled garden, and images of Arcadia kept flitting in and out of her mind: snippets of a ballad, the musical laughter of fellow sidhe, mythical plants and animals. Reality and memory blurred; Una was unsure of what was real and what was illusion, and less sure that it mattered. For one brief moment, she was *home*. Rounding a corner, she seemed to see a servant misplacing a rosebush. Annoyed, she informed him that it didn't belong where he was putting it, but to the left, as it was in her memory. The young man paused, looking from her to the spot she indicated, then nodded and moved the bush. When he had finished, he smiled and introduced himself as Arthur Laurence.

Completely embarrassed, Una was at a loss for words. Arthur complimented her eye for harmony, and asked her if she was pleased with the results. With a mute nod, Una glanced at him, truly seeing him for the first time. She liked what she saw, and offered a tentative smile. Taking that as a sign of encouragement, Arthur offered to show her the rest of the garden. As they walked, he asked her opinions, and Una responded with the aesthetic sense that came from her memory of Arcadia. He was an attentive listener, and took note of all she said without question. When he offered to escort her home, she could not refuse. Arthur asked if he could see her again, and she readily agreed.

That fortunate meeting led to many more. Una found herself gradually warming to the earnest young man. He spoke often of his landscape work, and gave her tours of his "works in progress." He always welcomed Una's comments, and his work flourished. The two achieved a rare, magical synergy; her comments would spur Arthur to greater and greater success. Una cautiously reaped the Glamour from his creations, and even more cautiously began to open herself to him. Their meetings became dates, and romance bloomed as surely as any plant under Arthur's care. Within the year they were wed.

Una loved Arthur immensely, yet not with all her heart. How could she, when in truth she was not of his kind; she was fae and he was human? She felt their differences acutely, and was often overtaken by brooding silences. Arthur put forth every effort to make her happy, even creating the garden of her dreams, and she held him all the dearer for it. Yet how could she explain that his gift of love, drawn from her dreams of Arcadian youth, only made her suffering more poignant? With noble gratitude, she accepted his tribute in the spirit it was given, and endeavored to keep her yearning to herself. Her silences grew and came to cast a shadow over the marriage.

In desperation, Una requested and received a favor from Count Morrig. She wished to create a freehold on the grounds, a place where the Dreaming would be closer to

her. She hoped that such a powerful reminder of Arcadian Glamour would allow her to see her home in contrast, as merely a gift from her beloved, and not a torturous reminder of that which was lost. Sadly, the opposite occurred. Over time, the Glamour of the balefire mingled and multiplied with the Glamour formed by Arthur's dedicated creations. Her home became more magical, and Una fell prey to its call, growing further removed from the banal world outside its hedges. She came to view Arthur as an alien force of restraint. Though she loved him still, the call of the Dreaming pulled more strongly on her Romantic heart. He seemed oblivious to this subtle shift, and focused more and more on completing the garden. Una came to believe that the grounds held the place in his soul that once was hers. Yet, it was she who first abandoned him, so she said nothing. His obsession grew so powerful that he would work all night, and well into the morning. Oftentimes, Douglas would bring Arthur's exhausted body to the house, where Una waited. After a time, he ceased to come back to the house at all, but merely slept where he collapsed. One morning, the somber giant brought Una Arthur's worn body, snapped at the neck, noose still around his throat. She accepted his death resolutely, silent tears the only sign of her broken heart. Her silence grew, and for years, she mourned his loss.

Time, however, numbs, if not heals, even the deepest of wounds. Gradually, Una came to believe that her self-imposed seclusion was having a deleterious effect on her. Oddly unsettling dreams of Arthur plagued her, and at times she was certain she could still hear his voice. She had even begun to find herself responding to the whisperings only she seemed to hear. Fearing the classical signs of the first threshold of Bedlam, she determined to reenter the society of humans.

At first, she dedicated herself to charity work. It was as if she felt she could atone for the misery she caused Arthur by giving aid and hope to those in need. By the mid- 80s, she was sitting on advisory boards of several large charities, and much of the money from Douglas' customers was redirected to humanitarian aid. Una began to regain a sense of herself. Her actions on behalf of the less fortunate earned her praise from her House, and her name was again mentioned at court.

Anxious to fill the void in her life, Una turned to the arts. She began to frequent Savannah's many galleries and made a point to attend openings, basking in the resonant glory of satisfied and accomplished artists. It was at one such event that she met Nathan Earl. His painted landscapes were inspired creations that seemed to capture the unspoken, mystical aspects of even the most commonplace scenes; a crumbling warehouse, when framed by his hand, appeared mysterious and otherworldly. Intrigued, Una sought him out, and found him to be much as she expected: impassioned,

vibrant, and insightful. She found herself warming to these traits, and in turn, to the man. When he asked if he could see her again, Una was quite flattered, and agreed.

As she saw more of Nathan, he reinforced her impression of him. Every question she posed spurred him to greater and greater insights. Una began to feel useful again, connected to another person. Each time, however, that she asked to see his recent works, Nathan demurred. Her anticipation of his incipient genius only grew with every denial. The relationship slowly developed into a romance. Determined to learn from her past mistakes, Una prepared a very special meal for him at her home, imbued with Glamour, and took him into the orchid house. She could tell that he was enthralled, and hoped that this vision would only further inspire him. She answered his questions, when they came, honestly. Finally, she offered herself without pretense or deception, and was overjoyed when he accepted her gift of enchantment.

As the months progressed, Una's desire to see Nathan's works became irresistible. Finally driven to the brink of temptation, she snuck into the studio he had established in the drying shed and, with trembling fingers, unveiled the canvasses. What she saw stunned her; the paintings showed no evidence of genius, but rather a marked lack of it. She was standing mute amidst the accusing sheets of canvas when he entered. Finding her there, Nathan became enraged, and charged her with countless offenses: mistrust, deception, condescension, and most importantly, robbing him of his "vision" by exposing him to a reality he could not hope to equal. She accepted all of his accusations in silence, and was still standing motionless in the makeshift studio when Douglas found her hours later.

Consumed with guilt, Una could not bring herself to expel Nathan. He was allowed free reign of the grounds, contingent upon his silence in regard to the fae nature of all within. Again she retreated within herself, and took to wandering at odd hours. She began listening in earnest to the whispers; they offered comfort and consolation, both of which she desperately longed for. She came to believe that the voice was, indeed, some aspect of Arthur; even if drawn from her own memory, it filled a need that she sorely felt. If this was Bedlam, she deserved no less.

Taking solace where offered, she began to slowly right herself. Her appearances at Count Morig's court became more regular, and were warmly received. Una lobbied on Douglas' behalf, and obtained a title for him as a reward for his stalwart support. Her tragic past, her stately reserve, her vast freehold and the regard Count Morig held for her, all combined to elevate her standing. She began to attract applicants to her household, and accepted or denied them with rare dignity. Una came to be viewed as a prize to be won and cherished by a young and impetuous sidhe wilder named

Garrett. Though flattered, she was resolved to maintain her solitary existence. Alas, every polite rejection seemed only to incite him to further extremes. Bound by etiquette and the rules of courtly love, she was finally compelled to offer him conditional status as a member of her household. Recently she has found herself bemused by his eloquent professions of love undying, and his obvious suffering; she assures herself that it is nothing other than bemusement.

**Court:** Seelie

**Legacies:** Sage/Riddler

**House:** Liam

**Title:** Lady

**Seeming:** Grump

**Kith:** Sidhe

**Physical:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

**Social:** Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 5

**Mental:** Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

**Talents:** Alertness 1, Dodge 2, Empathy 3, Kenning 2, Subterfuge 2

**Skills:** Archery 3, Craft 2 (landscaping), Drive 1, Etiquette 3, Melee 1

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 2, Horticulture 2, Linguistics 1 (French), Medicine 2, Mythlore 2

**Arts:** Primal 3, Soothsay 3, Sovereign 2

**Realms:** Actor 3, Fae 3, Scene 3

**Backgrounds:** Freehold 4, Gremayre 3, Resources 4, Title 2

**Glamour:** 6

**Banality:** 5

**Willpower:** 6

**Image:** In her mortal guise, Una Laurence is a dignified, even regal, beauty. Thick, luxuriant auburn hair cascades around her serene face. Eyes of darkest verdure gaze compassionately at all in her presence. Well-cut, unornamented clothing enhances her slender, lithe form. Seen through fae eyes, her nobility is unquestionable. Raiment of the finest materials, made elegant by its simplicity, accentuates the cool, distant beauty of Una Morrowind. Every movement, every word or hint of expression exudes a grace rare even in faerie courts.

**Roleplaying Hints:** Twice bereft of love, you gird yourself with solitude. Benevolence, compassion, noblesse oblige: these are your duties, and you attend them earnestly. Though you know atonement is denied you, you cannot but hope to redress the overbalance of harm caused by your desire for love. By aiding others, leading them to discover the numinous within themselves, you hope to find some measure of forgiveness. Treat all with compassion and understanding; the only love you allow yourself is maternal. Repay every injustice with kindness, and reward kindness generously.

## ARTHUR LAURENCE

From the time he was a child, Arthur Laurence loved the outdoors. He spent countless hours roaming the countryside, from swamp to pasture, just to see what hidden secrets and unexpected beauty he could find. It came as a tragic blow when his favorite stand of trees was bulldozed to make room for a gas station. Tears in his eyes, he vowed to protect the nature he loved from asphalt and concrete.

Throughout his adolescence, he nursed the dream of becoming a park ranger, the solitary protector of his warded forest. A trip to New York city changed all that. Carried along on a business trip by a father who thought the break from school would be a welcome reward for his son, Arthur found himself growing more and more withdrawn as the trip went on. When his father noticed and asked him what was wrong, Arthur replied that he missed the trees, and wanted to go home. The next day, his father took him to Central Park.

That such a green place could exist in the heart of a city never occurred to Arthur. He marveled at the stately old trees, and the obvious pleasure New Yorkers took in this slice of nature. His dream changed; he wanted to make growing things available to city dwellers. When he expressed this to his father, he was rewarded with a collection of picture books on famous parks and gardens. He took summer jobs with nurseries and landscapers, and found that working with his hands, in direct contact with his beloved nature, pleased him immensely.

Such work became the focus of his life. He graduated from college with degrees in horticulture and ecology and returned to Savannah, where he opened Florist Primaeval. Starting with little, his hard work and dedication to bringing nature to the cities gradually won him a steady supply of customers. He was an up and coming young florist when he met Una Jenkins. Finally, a woman who shared his passion. Better yet, she unconsciously possessed a vision that complemented his work. The more time he spent with Una, the more enthralled and fascinated he became. To his good fortune, she seemed to return these feelings. Their May wedding took place in the private garden of a grateful customer, and their happiness seemed assured.

As a testament to his adoration, he built a house for his wife that reflected what he had learned of her vision. Her silent awe filled him with pride. He promised himself that he would always try to add to her obvious pleasure, and began making plans to surround her with the garden of her dreams. At first, both his marriage and his business flourished. He worked slowly, gradually transforming their home. However, a dark mood seemed to overtake his wife. Any attempt to get Una to talk was answered with protests



that she was fine. Arthur was lost; all he could think was that she didn't approve of the work he was doing, but was afraid to tell him. Determined to please her, he resolved to work harder; however, every time he thought he succeeded, the silences became worse. He began to neglect his business to such an extent that Una hired help for him, but that merely strengthened his resolve. Douglas proved to be a great help, and a quick study. With his aid the garden began to change more rapidly. Unfortunately, the cycle only accelerated; the more Arthur worked to please Una, the more distant she grew.

He became more and more obsessed, accepting whatever help was there was without question. Like a man possessed, he worked whenever sleep or food didn't make demands on him. Finally, one night, in his exhaustion, the truth became clear: it wasn't his work that was making Una unhappy. Thinking that it could only be him, he wandered the garden, the symbol of his failure. Even a talk with one of the workers, out admiring the night, didn't help. His despair was inconsolable. Arthur found himself at the entrance to the orchid house, the one place on his property that he had never seen. Having reached his lowest ebb, he decided to hang himself there. His action was significant, for it contrasted what Una used to love with what had come to replace him in her heart.

An indeterminate time of confusion followed, and Arthur could barely remember who he was, or where. All he knew was that he could not leave, that there was something he must do. Over time, things became clearer; eventually even memory returned. His home, and all within, seemed terribly changed. Arthur couldn't

believe he had killed himself, that he had abandoned all that he cared for. His love for Una was in no way diminished by his death, nor was his dedication to complete the garden. Unfortunately, he wasn't in a position to do much about either. He saw Una, and longed to ease her pain. To his great surprise, she began to respond to his verbal comfort. Encouraged, he came to realize what he could do about getting the garden finished. Arthur began following Douglas about, and one night found himself transported into his dreams. Recovering quickly, he attempted to convey his need to the sleeping giant. Though he had some success, Douglas at this time appears to be reluctant and furtive in his task.

**Note:** Arthur has become a wraith. As such his powers are quite different from those of a changeling. His powers have been approximated here; for more information on wraiths see **Wraith: The Oblivion**.

**Arts:** Arthur can whisper to the living, as well as enter their dreams. Very recently he has come to be able to make himself visible, as well.

**Realms:** none

**Backgrounds:** none

**Glamour:** 7 (Used for powering his wraithly abilities.)

**Banality:** none

**Willpower:** 5

**Image:** When visible, Arthur appears as a translucent, indistinct version of his living form: a slim, haggard, middle-aged man dressed in simple work clothing. His once open expression is now clouded with sadness.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You still love your wife deeply; it's as if death has cleared your head, and you can't help wondering how things went so terribly wrong. She has begun to respond to your spectral voice, and you are having conversations again, though at times it seems Una believes you to be a figment of her imagination. You also watch Douglas work; you value his friendship more now than ever before, and take pride in the skills you taught him. You visit him in his dreams, showing him images of your plans for the hedge maze. Everything, and everyone, looks quite different to you now, but you assume that this is just a part of being dead. You recently discovered that you can make yourself visible, but the look of terror on that strange young girl's face has made you cautious about doing so.

## Nathan Earl

Nathan Earl was an aspiring, not-so-young-anymore artist in Savannah, struggling to make his mark with his painting. A lifetime's dedication finally resulted in favorable reviews in the fall of 1986; the tragedy of it was that the works had all been painted years earlier. What everyone heralded as a bold new mode of expression for him was, in fact, something he had already lost. Still, some acclaim was better than none, and he reveled in it.

Then she appeared: Una Laurence. Nathan had never seen so enchanting a woman before in his life; he was instantly smitten. She praised his work, as had many others, but it seemed that she possessed some understanding of what it all meant, as if she both shared and appreciated his vision. She almost rekindled it within him; he spoke of his works as if they were recent, and she listened attentively. As the gallery was closing, he worked up the nerve to ask her out for coffee. To his great delight, she agreed. This was to be the first of many similar outings. The more time he spent around Una, the easier it became to forget his recent failures. Nathan began to convince himself that his talent had never really left him. Una's praise and attention made it all the easier.

The relationship moved in a familiar direction; Nathan had been quite a popular catch when he was younger, and knew what to say at all the right moments. She appealed to his vanity, and he loved her for it. The night she invited him to her home, he thought he knew what to expect. The garden stunned him; it spoke of diligent care, and more importantly, of wealth. Finally, he thought, things had turned around for him. In such surroundings, and under Una's loving care, he felt that he could create again. Then the world changed.



After drinking Una's special tea, Nathan was dazed. The world became at once beautiful and unfamiliar; even something so simple as a blade of grass practically vibrated with hidden, magical meaning. Una had become a creature of indescribable beauty, and her garden a terrible, wonderful Eden. He was speechless, and could only listen as she explained things to him. That she, and her home, were of the fae made perfect sense. Nothing else could explain what he had seen. When invited to stay with her, he could not refuse.

At first, it was a sensual bliss. Una was generous and warm, and Nathan never tired of the mysterious world he was now a part of. However, it soon became clear that he was unable to create. It was as if the wonders he had seen had robbed him of inspiration; how could he compete with such beauty? Una kept asking to see his works, and he continually refused her. He wanted to keep his failure to himself. He was afraid it was his art she was attracted to, and once she realized that it was gone, she would lose all interest in him. When he found her in his studio, disillusionment plain on her face, the dam of resentment burst. He accused her of every wrong he could imagine, and blamed her for the loss of his art. To his great surprise, she offered not a word in her own defense. Enraged, he stalked away. He waited for her to demand that he leave, yet the days became weeks, and the weeks months. Eventually it became clear that he was free to stay. Ironically, this acceptance of his behavior only caused the bitterness to grow. Currently he lives in what was once his studio, and avoids Una as much as possible.

**Physical:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

**Mental:** Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3

**Social:** Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

**Talents:** Alertness 1, Brawl 2, Empathy 1, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 2

**Skills:** Drive 2, Etiquette 1, Firearms 1, Painting 4

**Knowledges:** Linguistics 2 (French, Spanish), Medicine 1, Mythlore 1, Occult 1

**Backgrounds:** Fame 1 (as a painter), Resources 1

**Glamour:** none

**Banality:** 6

**Willpower:** 4

**Image:** Nathan's natural, golden-boy good looks are beginning to fade. Though he is still attractive, his age is beginning to show in the lines around his brown eyes and the furrows in his brow. His brown hair is slightly unkempt, and in a style several years out of date. Despite his attempts to keep it at bay, middle age is beginning to take a firm hold.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You are a very bitter man. You feel that Una has robbed you of the only thing you ever truly valued: your artistic vision. Secretly you know that it was lost years before, but you would rather die than admit this, even to yourself. Fear of old age is all that seems to keep you in the freehold. In truth, you are hoping that someone, some day, will confront you with the wreck you have become and hold you accountable for your wrongs against Una. Until that happens, your self-loathing manifests as bitterness and jealousy.

## Douglas Biggins

Douglas Biggins has always lived up to his name. Since birth, he was larger than all the others. He learned the lesson of restraint at an early age, when he seriously injured another child while fighting over a toy. The shock of what he had done triggered his Chrysalis, and his kith was clear to all Kithain. Though renowned for his kind, careful nature, Douglas knows that a monster lives within him, just waiting for a chance to escape. Adventure in the service of nobles gave him an opportunity to release the darker impulses, thereby protecting himself and others.

His desire to help others is genuine, however. Some brave danger and risk because they seek for fame, and Douglas does not begrudge them their moment in the spotlight. But he has chosen a different path. Injustice, wrongs committed against the weak by those who are bigger and stronger, compels the quiet giant to take action, applying force if necessary. Many a bully, whether human, Unseelie, or chimera, has been shown the error of his ways. Unfortunately, the violent life of an itinerant saint only made the dark aspect of his personality stronger. This point was driven home on the fateful night that Douglas decided to encourage a band of Unseelie to seek more peaceful hobbies than mugging tourists. Shouldering his mighty hammer, he went after them. Though violence was not his goal, he was prepared for it. The motley of childlings and wilders were abusive, and chose to ignore his polite suggestion. Once the inevitable melee had ended, Douglas realized with horror that all had been chimerically crippled, and many had been slain. The monster in his heart reveled, but he consciously recoiled, and decided at that moment to seek a more stable way of life.

When he heard that a local noble was accepting retainers, Douglas humbly applied. To his surprise, he was the first accepted, and he moved his home at once to Florist Primaeval. What he saw there almost broke his giant heart. Though the difficulties of faerie-human love are known to all Kithain, observing the daily reality is another matter. He accepted Lady Una's command to aid her mortal husband in his work, and to see that no harm came to him. The

simple work of gardening calmed his darker impulses, and he proved an adept student. He grew to admire Arthur Laurence, and came to consider him a friend. This made Arthur's slow but steady decline all the more painful for Douglas to witness, and he did whatever he could to help him, at least making certain he ate and rested. He began to assume more and more of the burden of operating the business aspects of Arthur's work, and found that he liked it. The morning that he discovered Arthur's body, hung by the circle of oaks, he was not overly surprised. That he could not aid his friend is the greatest tragedy of his life.

Within the past few months, he has begun to dream of Arthur, and of the unfinished hedge maze. Though Lady Una has prohibited any from entering the area, Douglas has been sneaking in late at night and laying plans to finish it. He interpreted the dreams to suggest that this final act of loyalty to Arthur would stand as a lasting tribute to his late friend. He is willing to suffer whatever rebuke Lady Una wishes when his disobedience comes to light.

**Court:** Seelie

**Legacies:** Saint/Beast

**House:** Liam (affiliation)

**Title:** Squire

**Seeming:** Wilder

**Kith:** Troll

**Physical:** Strength 5, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

**Social:** Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

**Talents:** Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 1, Empathy 2, Intimidation 2, Kenning 3

**Skills:** Craft (Landscaping) 3, Etiquette 2, Melee 3

**Knowledges:** Mythlore 3, Medicine 2, Horticulture 2

**Arts:** Primal 3

**Realms:** Fae 3, Nature 2

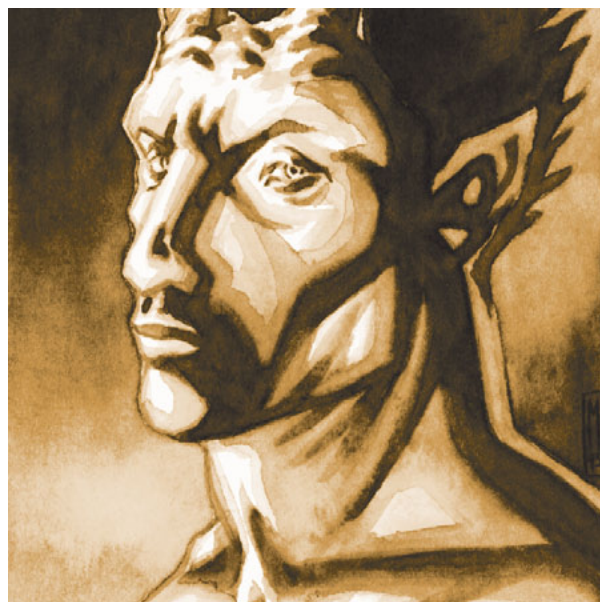
**Backgrounds:** Chimera 3 (a huge blacksmith's hammer; kith other than trolls have great difficulty lifting, much less wielding, it. Treat as a battle ax for damage purposes), Title 1, Resources 1

**Glamour:** 5

**Banality:** 3

**Willpower:** 7

**Image:** Even in his mortal form, Douglas is an imposing figure. He stands a large, stocky 6' 5" tall, and has not an ounce of fat on his huge frame. His thick black hair is kept short, and his face is perpetually clean-shaven. Kindly ice-blue eyes soften the otherwise stern countenance of this giant of a man. In his fae form, he is even more titanic: seven feet of blue-gray muscle, pale white horns curling into his hair, and a wide, prominent jaw that exposes



sharp, ivory canines when he smiles. Even in this form, his eyes are usually kind. When they are not, wise Kithain give him wide berth.

**Roleplaying Hints:** Others perceive you as a kind, gentle man, but you know yourself to be otherwise. The dark half of your being revels in pain, power, and fear; you constantly guard against its release. You move and speak slowly, taking the time to consider the results of anything you say or do. You honor Lady Una, and her slightest wish, save one, you obey without hesitation; she has earned both your trust and your respect over the years. You distrust Garrett, more for the pain he may cause your Lady than for any fault of his own. Twyla is the younger sister you never had, and in all things you treat her tenderly. Even her pranks at your expense earn nothing harsher than a soft chuckle. With all your heart, you wish you truly were as others saw you. Perhaps in time it will be so.

## Garrett Brody

Exiled to Earth while still an infant, Garrett Brody was raised as a child of privilege. The Brodys were a wealthy family with roots going back centuries; Garrett wanted for nothing as a child, save perhaps a bit of restraint. Not that he was a bad child; he was bright, curious, and amiable, but at times, a dark, selfish mood would come over him. His Chrysalis occurred when he was but five years old; the accompanying Glamour released attracted Kithain from miles around. Smuggled out of his bed at night, he was presented to the nearest court, where his kith and lineage were ascertained.

The appearance of such a "golden child" made for even more lenience in Garrett's life, but to his credit, he

abused this less and less as he grew older. His curiosity, an Eiluned temperament, was encouraged. Garrett poked his precocious nose into everything, absorbing as much as possible. Court manners came to him with startling ease. As he grew older and more dashing, he became drawn, not unwillingly, into the Great Game. As interesting and challenging as it was, the greater game, courtly love, appealed to him more. In this arena, as in the others to which he turned his attentions, he was a quick study. As he passed from childling to wilder, he began collecting tokens from older and presumably more experienced Kithain. The crowd of admirers who desired to call him champion quickly grew.

Mysteries spoke to the innermost part of Garrett's being, whether they be the hidden machinations of fae nobles, or the Byzantine and contradictory workings of the heart. Though he courted with skill, it was more to serve his curiosity than his ardor. Not that he didn't enjoy the attentions of various beloveds and competitors; he did, immensely. Yet despite all of his eloquent professions of undying love, he was never passionately engaged.

At the Greening festival in the court of Count Morrig, Garrett was idling away at casual courtship when he noticed a new face in the crowd. Sure of a warm reception and curious to see who this self-possessed beauty was, he engaged her in conversation. She was polite, but deftly parried all of his banter, leaving no impression other than that she was flattered, but uninterested. Curious, Garrett began to make subtle inquiries as to the identity of this mysterious woman. He discovered that she was Lady Una Morrowind, subject of local legend, and highly regarded by the count himself. His curiosity piqued, he began to diligently collect information, and was both surprised and pleased with what he discovered: conqueress of nunnehi, widow of a mortal husband, defender of a sizable freehold constructed for her by the count's decree, and said to hold a mortal as an enchanted lover in her eldritch glade.

Seized with curiosity, Garrett was unable to resist the enigmatic Lady Una. Having learned of her interests, he declared his intentions in the language of flowers, and presented to her a bouquet of fern and chervil (sincerity), burgundy roses (unconscious beauty), alyssum (worth beyond beauty), and verbena (enchantment). Her response of marjoram, primrose, geranium and ivy on a bed of moss indicated that she was flattered, but considered his courtship a passing fancy of callow youth; she felt a vaguely maternal affection, and extended the offer of her friendship. Far from being put off, Garrett pursued her, proclaiming his ardent sincerity with a florid eloquence that became the talk of many at court. Feeling that perhaps she saw him as unworthy, he undertook a quest in her name; the tale

of his arduous and harrowing journey deep into nunnehi territory (made more perilous by his telling) won him the lady's reconsideration. As a token of his intent, Garrett freely forsook all others, and dedicated all of his successes and sufferings to Lady Una. Though this caused no small amount of dismay and swooning at court, it won him a conditional post in her household.

**Court:** Seelie

**Legacies:** Courtier/Peacock

**House:** Eiluned

**Title:** Squire

**Seeming:** Wilder

**Kith:** Sidhe

**Physical:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

**Social:** Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 5

**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

**Talents:** Athletics 1, Dodge 2, Expression 2, Subterfuge 2

**Skills:** Craft (Landscaping) 1, Drive 2, Etiquette 3, Melee 3

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 2, Investigation 1, Mythlore 3, Occult 2, Politics 2

**Arts:** Sovereign 2, Wayfare 3

**Realms:** Actor 2, Fae 3, Scene 2

**Backgrounds:** Resources 4, Title 1, Chimera 2 (a chimerical rapier)

**Glamour:** 4

**Banality:** 4

**Willpower:** 6



**Image:** Garrett Brody is a dashing man in his early 20s. Tall, slim and fair, his brooding violet eyes have captured the interest of many, both fae and mortal. He moves and dresses with a casual elegance befitting someone of his family's station. His faerie form is even more imposing; rich chestnut hair frames a lean face that can be both cool and expressive by turns. His clothing is always immaculate, if subtle; ostentation is for those with something to prove. As of late, he has taken to wearing either chamomile or purple columbine as his personal token.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Others may perceive you as aloof, but you are merely contemplative. You never speak, or act, without purpose, be it idle pleasure, the Great Game, or the pursuit of your beloved. And you do sincerely love Lady Una. Both a beauty and a mystery, she has engaged your heart and your mind. Though externally stalwart, you tremble inwardly when in her presence, awaiting even the slightest sign of her acceptance. You have even begun to work in the garden, and find it less distasteful than you imagined. You respect Douglas for his knowledge and patience, but often find Twyla abrasive. You suspect she is planning some prank at your expense, though you aren't terribly worried. You have nothing but contempt for Nathan, though you mask it to spare your Lady's distress. Though you barely know Dion, you find yourself questioning his motives. Of course this isn't competition; you merely wish to protect your Lady's honor and home.

## Twyla

Twyla was an adorable child. Everyone doted on her, but no one more than her big, jolly bear of an uncle, Bartholomew. He spoiled her with his constant attention until she would often cackle with glee. It was almost like he was just a kid pretending to be a grownup; his idea of fun was perfectly in line with Twyla's. And he told her stories, broad sweeping epics of faraway places, danger, and true love. She often said she wished she could run away with him. One day, after tending Twyla through an odd illness, he suggested they do just that.

Uncle Bartholomew took her to the most wondrous woods she had ever seen. They romped and played for hours, until even her childish stamina was taxed. Taking the opportunity to share sandwiches he had prepared in advance, he asked her what kind of animal she would like to be. Without hesitation, she said a cat. When asked if she wanted to see a trick, Twyla could hardly contain herself. He gave her a magic brownie, and told her to eat it with her eyes closed. When she snuck a peek, she burst out laughing; her uncle looked like a giant raccoon! Then she realized that not only her uncle had changed. The woods became a magical place, like something out of one of his

stories. She even thought she could see a tower in the distance. With a nonchalant shrug, Bartholomew asked her if she wanted to meet the heroes of his stories. After she calmed down, he took her to the court of Baron Morrig.

Twyla was an instant hit; even the frosty sidhe noblewomen let her sit in their laps. Finally, the terribly handsome and noble Baron Morrig asked her uncle a few questions, then turned to Twyla. He told her in a very serious voice that she was a faerie child, and explained to her some of the restrictions and responsibilities. Her response of, "Cool!" even brought a smile to his face. Her uncle Bartholomew was assigned as her mentor. She proved an enthusiastic, if less than diligent, student; she had learned most of his tricks, as well as a few rules, when the time for her Saining came. She named herself "Muffinhead" after a beloved neighborhood cat, secretly certain that no one would ever guess it. Gravely, Bartholomew presented her with the Lunchbox of Wonders as a Saining gift, and nearly hurt himself laughing when she inadvertently triggered the cantrip he had left in it.

Her childhood was a happy blur. Her obvious creativity (she had dozens of "imaginary friends") earned her acceptance to a special arts program, where she flourished. As she grew into a mischievous teenager, she discovered boys and even more trouble. She also discovered she could write, transcribing and modifying the tales she had heard as a child. Soon she was inventing her own literary niche. If not for that embarrassing kissing incident at the judging, she was certain to have taken state honors in creative writing.

As talented a writer as she was, flirting was her true calling. She juggled suitors like a master, always having at least three boys, human or Kithain, hanging on her every word. Twyla was certain that her true love was out



there, somewhere; in the mean time, she had to practice. Surprisingly, few left with hurt feelings, and most regarded her fondly. Court enthralled her, and she practically swooned with delight whenever anyone, especially nobles, engaged in courtly love.

Despite the accepted futility of it, she heartily endeavored to embarrass one particularly pretentious sidhe wilder named Garrett. It wasn't like she thought he was cute or anything, just that he needed to be taken down a notch or two. At least that's what she told herself. She harried him for months, always waiting for him to trigger one of her traps, but to no avail. What she did notice, however, was his obsession with a noble grump. Curious about the subject of his fascination, she went to see this mystery woman.

Lady Una received her properly, and quickly warmed to her infectious good cheer. Twyla talked to her of her hopes and dreams, and even about her writing. When the Lady offered her a combination of patronage and vas-salage, Twyla was for once struck speechless. Overcome with gratitude, she accepted. Currently, she works in the garden, attends the occasional writing seminar, and tries to embarrass Garrett. Needless to say, her writing is much more successful than her pranking.

**Court:** Seelie

**Legacies:** Troubadour/Fool

**House:** Liam (affiliation)

**Seeming:** Wilder

**Kith:** Pooka

**Physical:** Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

**Social:** Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3

**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

**Talents:** Alertness 2, Athletics 1, Brawl 1, Dodge 3, Empathy 2, Expression 3, Kenning 1, Subterfuge 2

**Skills:** Crafts 1, Etiquette 1, Melee 1, Security 2, Stealth 3

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 3, Investigation 2, Mythlore 1

**Arts:** Legerdemain 2, Primal 1

**Realms:** Nature 2, Scene 4

**Backgrounds:** Dreamers 2, Mentor 1, Treasure 2

**Glamour:** 4

**Banality:** 3

**Willpower:** 5

**Treasures:** The Lunchbox of Wonders; a Pyx in the form of a battered metal lunchbox with scenes from a terrible, all-girl action show on the sides

**Image:** Twyla is a tiny, nimble young woman with an eternal glimmer of mischief in her eyes. In mortal visage, her wide face is dominated by those twinkling green eyes and her wide, sensuous mouth. She wears her dark brown

hair short, just covering the tops of her ears. Her changeling self isn't altogether different; her dark, furry, pointed ears and luminous green eyes make her kith obvious, as well as her feline affinity. In either form she favors battered blue jeans, exotic T-shirts, and boots, the only difference being the hole in her jeans for her cat tail in fae form.

**Roleplaying Hints:** Life is fun. Sure, you're waiting for your one true love to come and sweep you off your feet, but you have to fill your time until then. You manage to see the humor in almost any situation, and strive to make it plain to others as well. You're an incredible sucker for romance, and flirting is one of your favorite pastimes. You think Lady Una is just the coolest, all tragic and noble. Bigs (Douglas) is the big brother of your dreams; nothing you do seems to make him mad. Garish (Garrett) is cute, but way too stuck up for his own good. His Royal Majesty, the Right Annoying Nathan, drives you insane, and you would prank him mercilessly if not for the effect it might have on the Lady. And Dion... wow. You're trying to think of just the right prank for this charmer. Barring that, you'll find some way to trip over him.

## Dion

Dion was never much for rules. Even as a youth, there were problems. Why did he have to go to school? Why couldn't he keep the candy he stole? He would have been his parents' nightmare if he wasn't so dutiful and such a smooth talker. He ignored their rules when it suited him, but a more charming and polite child had never been born. Though he probably couldn't have gotten away with murder, anything less is open to question.

That all changed when the police brought him home in a squad car. It turned out that he had been running a scam, stealing items from one store and returning them to another for refunds. In response to his parents' fervent questions, he offered his accustomed shrugs and smile. This didn't get him terribly far with the judge; he was sent to juvenile hall.

It wasn't so bad at first; his easy manner and charming tongue won him friends in virtually no time. However, he still didn't, or wouldn't, understand the difference between what was his and what he wanted to be his. When he was caught with another boy's radio, he was severely beaten, and taken to the infirmary. He thought he was dying, or that his head had been broken, because he saw and reexperienced the most terrifying moments of his short life. When a grotesquely scarred little boy offered to get him out, he wasn't sure if it was death come for him, or a wish come true. Either way, he would be free, so he went.

The boy was an Unseelie redcap, and took him to see McGuffin, a redcap grump and guru of the gift. McGuffin



fixed him up right, and fostered him for the standard time. Dion learned a lot, more than he ever had in school. After a year and a day, he was a verified con man. Full of himself, he hit the road in search of adventure. Though an adept sweet-talker, the good life always seemed to be just beyond his reach. Either the police, or some pesky Seelie noble, always interfered. In any case, it was frustrating. On the verge of becoming a wilder, he returned to McGuffin with his problems.

McGuffin listened to his tales of trickery and woe, nodding to himself. When Dion had finished, he was assured that it was through no fault of his own that success eluded him. It was the Seelie Court's fault; they didn't want anyone to have a good time, because fun threatened the order of things. McGuffin went on to explain that the Unseelie had to get organized, else their way of life would be extinguished. When Dion asked what he could do, he was taken to a secret meeting of the Shadow Court, and initiated in its mysteries.

Over the years, Dion has wandered throughout the Southeast, spreading a little chaos wherever he goes. From time to time he gets caught, and on the rare occasion that he can't talk his way out of trouble, run out of town. Still, he doesn't usually cause anyone permanent harm, at least no one faerie. If he has a particular weakness, though, it has to be women. Not any one in particular, but all of them, as a class. With his good looks and charm, many are just as interested in him, and think nothing of lavishing him with gifts and favors.

Dion serves the Shadow Court when it suits him, striking a minor blow to nobility whenever he thinks he can get away with it. The most telling yet was a lucky

coincidence. He had recently become a bit taken with a young pooka named Twyla, and began visiting her from time to time. When he learned that her mistress was none other than Lady Una Morrowind, he began visiting her more frequently. The Shadow Court had not forgotten the events set into motion by Una's discovery of the cache of cold iron years ago, and holds her responsible for the foiled assassination attempt on the duchess of the southern coast. When he learned of Una's mortal husband, he saw the perfect opportunity to strike at her.

Using his secret talent at Chicanery and his glib tongue, he began talking to Arthur, making him more depressed than he naturally would have been. On that fateful night, Dion pulled out all the stops, hoping to goad Arthur into abandoning Una in the night. When he learned of Arthur's suicide, he quickly left town. Once it became clear that he was not suspect, he rationalized his actions. It was common knowledge that love between mortal and changeling was a doomed affair; all he had done was give that Seelie lady a harsh lesson in reality. Besides, it wasn't as if Arthur was important; he was only a human gardener. Dion stayed away from Savannah until he no longer felt guilty. Twyla remained a prize not yet won, so he returned to the scene of the crime, only to find that Una had another human lover about. This one, some feckless painter, was an unbearable boor; Dion almost felt guilty for abusing him. Almost. It's a simple matter to feed his bitterness, really; there is so much raw material to work with.

**Court:** Unseelie

**Legacies:** Rogue/Wayfarer

**Seeming:** Wilder

**Kith:** Eshu

**Physical:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

**Social:** Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4

**Mental:** Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

**Talents:** Alertness 2, Dodge 2, Empathy 1, Expression 3, Kenning 1, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 2

**Skills:** Etiquette 2, Melee 2, Performance 4, Stealth 1, Survival 1

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 2, Linguistics 2 (French, Spanish), Mythlore 2

**Arts:** Chicanery 3, Wayfare 1

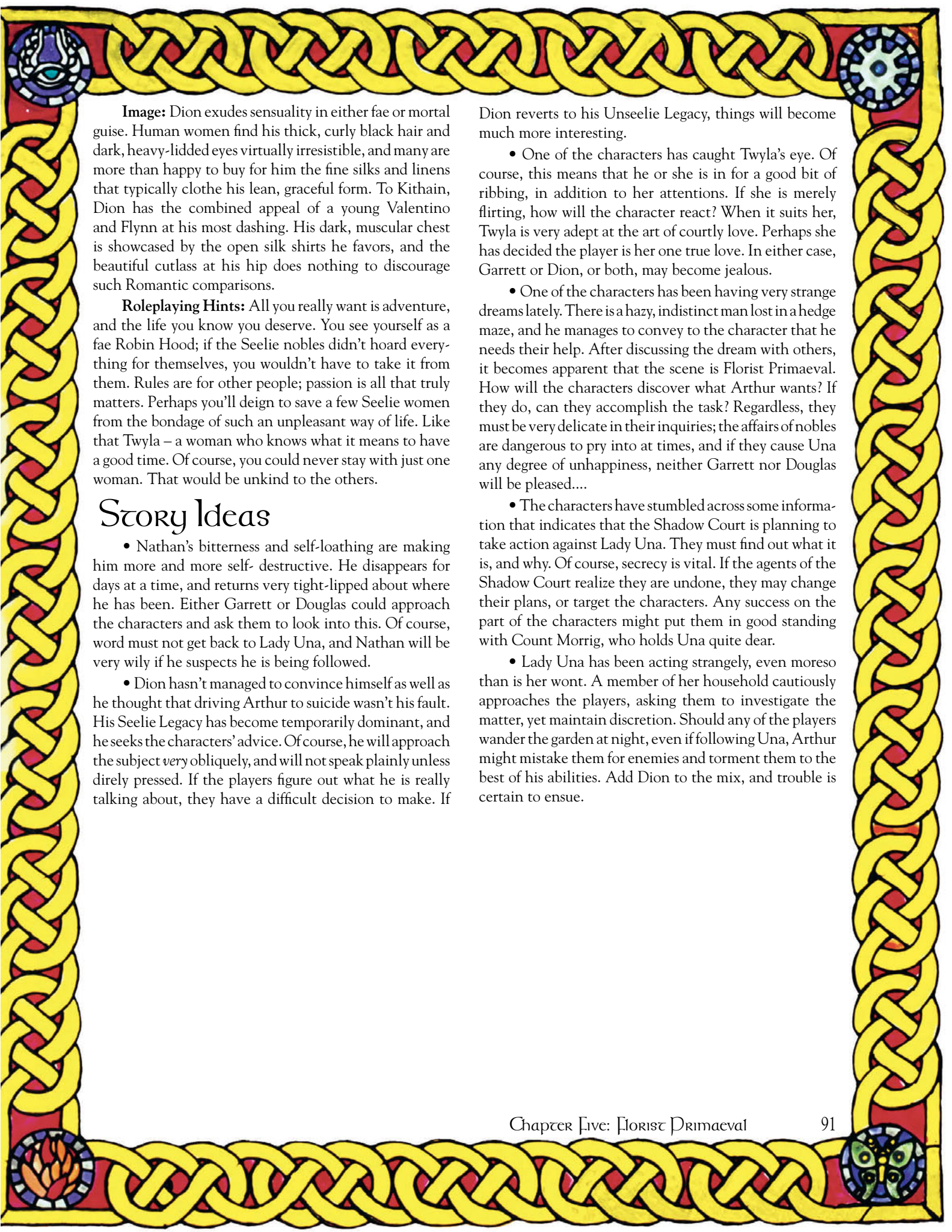
**Realms:** Actor 2, Fae 2, Scene 2

**Backgrounds:** Chimera 4 (mail shirt [level 2 armor], ornate cutlass, both gifts from the Shadow Court), Gremayre 1

**Glamour:** 4

**Banality:** 3

**Willpower:** 5



**Image:** Dion exudes sensuality in either fae or mortal guise. Human women find his thick, curly black hair and dark, heavy-lidded eyes virtually irresistible, and many are more than happy to buy for him the fine silks and linens that typically clothe his lean, graceful form. To Kithain, Dion has the combined appeal of a young Valentino and Flynn at his most dashing. His dark, muscular chest is showcased by the open silk shirts he favors, and the beautiful cutlass at his hip does nothing to discourage such Romantic comparisons.

**Roleplaying Hints:** All you really want is adventure, and the life you know you deserve. You see yourself as a fae Robin Hood; if the Seelie nobles didn't hoard everything for themselves, you wouldn't have to take it from them. Rules are for other people; passion is all that truly matters. Perhaps you'll deign to save a few Seelie women from the bondage of such an unpleasant way of life. Like that Twyla – a woman who knows what it means to have a good time. Of course, you could never stay with just one woman. That would be unkind to the others.

## Story Ideas

- Nathan's bitterness and self-loathing are making him more and more self-destructive. He disappears for days at a time, and returns very tight-lipped about where he has been. Either Garrett or Douglas could approach the characters and ask them to look into this. Of course, word must not get back to Lady Una, and Nathan will be very wily if he suspects he is being followed.

- Dion hasn't managed to convince himself as well as he thought that driving Arthur to suicide wasn't his fault. His Seelie Legacy has become temporarily dominant, and he seeks the characters' advice. Of course, he will approach the subject very obliquely, and will not speak plainly unless direly pressed. If the players figure out what he is really talking about, they have a difficult decision to make. If

Dion reverts to his Unseelie Legacy, things will become much more interesting.

- One of the characters has caught Twyla's eye. Of course, this means that he or she is in for a good bit of ribbing, in addition to her attentions. If she is merely flirting, how will the character react? When it suits her, Twyla is very adept at the art of courtly love. Perhaps she has decided the player is her one true love. In either case, Garrett or Dion, or both, may become jealous.

- One of the characters has been having very strange dreams lately. There is a hazy, indistinct man lost in a hedge maze, and he manages to convey to the character that he needs their help. After discussing the dream with others, it becomes apparent that the scene is Florist Primaeval. How will the characters discover what Arthur wants? If they do, can they accomplish the task? Regardless, they must be very delicate in their inquiries; the affairs of nobles are dangerous to pry into at times, and if they cause Una any degree of unhappiness, neither Garrett nor Douglas will be pleased....

- The characters have stumbled across some information that indicates that the Shadow Court is planning to take action against Lady Una. They must find out what it is, and why. Of course, secrecy is vital. If the agents of the Shadow Court realize they are undone, they may change their plans, or target the characters. Any success on the part of the characters might put them in good standing with Count Morrig, who holds Una quite dear.

- Lady Una has been acting strangely, even moreso than is her wont. A member of her household cautiously approaches the players, asking them to investigate the matter, yet maintain discretion. Should any of the players wander the garden at night, even if following Una, Arthur might mistake them for enemies and torment them to the best of his abilities. Add Dion to the mix, and trouble is certain to ensue.



# Chapter Six: Gangsters' Hideaway

By Chris Hind

*I would not live in the world you offer. It  
has neither sun, nor moon, nor air to breath.  
It has no faith... no love... no honor.*

– Sir Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe*

In the World of Darkness, the mundane city of Toronto is neither glamorous nor squalid. It has no significant reputation, is known for no strange tales or staggering historic events. The city is the exemplar of moderation –unremarkable, unobtrusive and unpretentious. Among Kithain, Toronto is infamous for both the dense smog of Banality that clouds it, and the great population of Autumn People that crowds its streets.

Yet the Dreaming has not been completely brushed away. Wisps of Glamour cling to the recesses and corners,

the backs and beneaths, the hard-to-reach places. Such areas have become as deep as loss and as forgettable as wonder, the foster-home of fae and chimera and inspiration.

One such refuge is nestled between plaza and synagogue, between a four-story office building and middle-class residences. It is a forested valley that has slipped down the cracks between steel and concrete. In the records that are kept in the royal halls of Tara-nar, this fief is known as the freehold of Tangled Valley. Local childlings call it Gangsters' Hideaway.

## ...in the Real World

At the bend in Codsell Avenue, there's a short, simple fence – just two posts and two beams – white against an earthy-jade mottling of forested escarpment. It's not much of a barrier or safety feature. But it is substantial enough to pique curiosity and tempt defiance.

While inquisitiveness debates caution, you notice rune-like graffiti carved into the wood of one beam: HERE BE DRAGONS. That's enough to compel you to cross over the edge.

You swing out the kickstand and prop your bike. After a quick look-around, you roll over the fence and drop lightly on the other side.

Here the ground falls away steeply into the valley. Loose dirt and patches of fern begin to replace the grassy skirt above. As you descend, the city's clamor fades. Silence. Then your ears become sensitive to another range of sound: scampering, creaking, chirping, rustling whispers, an echoing cry of "aw-aw-ee-ee-ee-ee," and the deafening retort of every snapping twig underfoot.

Part way down to the valley floor, a concrete storm drain juts from the slope, the opening half-covered by a rough grill. Some of the bars are missing; you could probably squeeze through. The darkness exacerbates your fear, and, with it, the temptation.... But right now there are still other places to explore. You turn away and follow the runoff to the valley floor.

In the chill shadows of the valley, fifty feet below the street, you get the feeling of being enfolded by the earth. The air smells of dirt and pine sap, trickling water and fresh cool air. From slope to slope, a variety of trees fill the valley. There are pines, cedars, firs, spruces, horse chestnuts, willows, maples, and strange conifers with bark like a pineapple. The highest tree-tops just clear street level, presenting a camouflage canopy to those above. The ground is textured with exposed roots, brown needles and leaves, rubbery ferns, mushrooms. Something small and bright flits from tree to tree, just barely in sight.

You try to discard the half-conscious suspicion that you are doing something FORBIDDEN. Up on the right ridge, a row of houses turns its back on this hidden glen. Surely no one can see you from way up there, concealed as you are by trees and foliage and the escarpment itself.

Ready to turn back, you suddenly spot a tree-fort in the distance. Planks nailed into tree trunks and log supports raise it a few feet off the ground. It appears to be constructed of corrugated aluminum siding, chip-board and plywood, pine boughs, chicken wire and old screen windows.

Wow! What a great spot for a tree-fort! Just the sort of place to retreat to after breaking knee-deep through the ice of a pond, and shiver while waiting for your pants to freeze into solid tubes. Here you could eat anything, any way you want, free from the sandwich-apple-treat sequence enforced by Lunchroom Monitors. Even without washing your hands after watching maggots ripple under the flesh of a dead pigeon! In such a place, you could make mud pies filled with poison berries and plot to slip them to your next-door neighbor. Ah. *The possibilities would be endless....*

The tree-fort is closer now. A sign is nailed above the door, its mitered letters painted black. It reads: GANGSTERS' HIDEAWAY. You stop short. Didn't some guy escape from prison yesterday or last month? Maybe this is his secret base! Curiosity draws you closer.

Accompanied by a worn track, the run-off stream that you have been following continues to trickle down the center of the valley for as far as you can see. Dangling, dampled shadows play tricks on your eyes; a few grainy shafts of sunlight draw your attention to some interesting features further on. But first, you stop to look at the tree-fort.

Raised only a few feet from the ground, it certainly wouldn't invoke a fear of heights. Still, you have to marvel at the work involved: finding the materials, dragging them here, putting them all together without the help of grown-ups. The tree-fort looks pretty sturdy, too. Crouching down, you take a look underneath. There's a circle of stones, like a fire pit, but with no signs of flame or fuel. Spiral designs are scratched into the smooth surfaces of the stones. When you pass your hand over them, the hairs on your arm tickle with static. Weird.

You crawl out from under there and walk around to the entrance. Standing on toe-tips, you pull open the creaky cupboard door that covers the entrance and peer inside. The interior is spacious, almost 5'x7'. Comic books and hockey cards are tacked to one wall. An old comforter hangs from another, keeping out the draft from between boards like a medieval tapestry. Above it are the words "Dianne + Mike" in red stain. A variety of pop cans are stacked neatly on a bench beside a jar of beer-bottle caps. Aside from these, there are many other treasures strewn about.

At this point you hear a distant bang, like a screen door closing. That FORBIDDEN feeling, forgotten in your curiosity, returns in force. You look around. Up on the ridge, a old man stares at you from his back porch.

You run and run, scramble up the ravine, jump on your bike, and peddle away from that place, probably never to return.



## ...in the Enchanted World

No, you never did return, did you. No matter. The real secrets of Tangled Valley and Gangsters' Hideaway are beyond your ken. This place is very different to those with fae Kenning.

Tangled Valley is a lost world. Forgotten by humans, it's also a place where vanished things turn up. Have you lost your pencil, wallet, paperback, bus token, odd sock, keys, baby's teether, hockey card, rabbit's foot, or pet newt? It's probably down here, scattered in the undergrowth or floating in the stream. You see, the Dreaming can play tricks on people. Every so often, it snatches something away from the real world, usually replacing it with a dust-bunny. Sometimes this vanishing process "hiccups," and you discover an item borrowed-but-thought-retained or never-seen-before.

We've got other stuff down here too. Have you wondered where the bits of denim ripped from your jeans go? The bright color of new clothes? Dimples? Doughnut holes? You guessed it. We got 'em all.

You say a familiar word or name has been snatched from the tip of your tongue? I know exactly what you're grasping for; it's right here. Ahhh, but I'm sure you'll figure it out on your own. Eventually.

So, you've lost your virginity? Or innocence? Sense of wonder? Appetite? Sanity? Want it back?

Everything ever lost has, at one time or another, turned up in Tangled Valley. Don't ask why: that's just the magical, mysterious nature of Glamour. These momentos are quickly claimed by changelings as a handy form of dross. Finders keepers, after all.

## An Explanation for Grumps

Alright, alright. So you do need an explanation for the vanishing process of Tangled Valley. Clearly, this place is unlike any other freehold. Truth is, I can't provide an answer; just a couple of theories.

It's pretty common knowledge that Tangled Valley was once a nunnehi glen. And glens apparently have ties to the Dreamrealms. There are moon bridge glens, healing glens, glens dedicated to animal totems, and so on. (This is what a friend of a friend of a friend who knows a werewolf says, anyway.) Maybe this glen was dedicated to the Amerindian god of Lost-and-Found.

The second suggestion, which may be related to the first, invokes the Endless Trod (see below). What if this trod doesn't have an end, but branches and spreads indefinitely like some chimerical, world-spanning tree? And what if the tips of these swaying branches occasionally brush the real world and, where this happens, they snatch something away? The "Dream-napped" items might then find their way here, or maybe are deposited along some other branch. This could explain all those Bermuda Triangle and falling frogs stories which so perplex mortals.

Hey, stop laughing. You asked.

## Gangsters' Hideaway

To cunning Kithain, the child's tree-fort appears rather sturdier than first thought. One almost gets the sense of a medieval manor hall. The interior is more expansive than it appears to be in the real world, and could seat a dozen diners at the high table. A central hearth opens in the floor. From below, balefire crackles merrily. In the soft gossamer light from the balefire, the comforter hanging on the wall resembles a quilted tapestry; the comics seem as precious as painted works of art.

Gangsters' Hideaway is a very small freehold. Varlan, lord of Tangled Valley, spends many a night here, wrapped in chimerical silks and furs. Thresher the herald tried to dream here once, but slept unsoundly due to incessant mewing by the Feathered Serpent; this only aggravated his chronic ill-temper. The Gangsters (a local motley) have been planning an overnight stay for weeks, but have yet to act upon these intentions. They claim D'n conspires against them, but their own trepidation is most likely also a factor.

## The Endless Trod

As in the real world, Tangled Valley continues past the freehold tree-fort. Kithain, however, realize it is neither a cloven tributary of the Don Valley nor an embouchure of Earl Bales Park. The path and stream running along the valley floor follow an apparently endless faerie trod.

The Gangsters once traveled for quite some time – perhaps an entire hour – along the Endless Trod without reaching its end. Bored and hungry, they turned back, vowing to return another time. Tilutan suspects that the trod links the Hideaway to another freehold. Rusalka secretly hopes that it leads to the Dreamrealms, or even to Arcadia.

While exploring the Endless Trod, changelings sometimes spot the Feathered Serpent gliding from tree to tree.

Those who have clambered up either slope report finding a deep forest – and not a house or a street in sight. Thick, straight trunks continue for as far as the eye can see. Branches form a dense tangle high above, blotting out any sign of sky. The ground is completely level, and barren of foliage or fallen leaves. None have dared explore these trackless woods, for fear of becoming utterly lost.

## Hunting Dross

Roll Perception + Kenning (difficulty 6). With three or more successes, you discover a memento worth one dross. One or two successes means there's something here to find; you just missed it. You can continue searching the next day. A botch is bad news: while searching the ground, you neglected to note your bearings and are now lost along the Endless Trod (see the nearby sidebar for details).

For the most part, these lost items are nothing special; their enchantment is based upon sentimental value and mysterious happenstance. At the Storyteller's discretion, however, four successes could turn up a memento worth two dross; five successes, three dross; and so on. A really persistent character might discover something like Nero's fiddle!

In any case, the Tangled Valley should yield only about one memento per week. So if another changeling scoured the region just yesterday, you are out of luck.

Also note that the Storyteller should come up with an imaginative description for a memento like innocence.

## Lost Along the Endless Trod

Where the Endless Trod leads - if it leads anywhere at all - is up to the individual Storyteller. No maps, random encounter tables, or other systems are provided. This section suggests how to handle events should a character leave the valley, and thus become lost.

Roll Perception + Survival (difficulty 8). You need only one success to find your way back to the comfortable fold of the valley. On a failure, try again tomorrow (at difficulty 9). Should you fail again, try one last time on a third day (at difficulty 10). If you fail at this last chance (or have botched any previous roll), then you are utterly and hopelessly lost to the Dreaming. Willpower can and should be used in this roll. If she prefers, a player may roll Gremayre instead (difficulty 6) or cast an appropriate cantrip.

## History

The earliest stories of Tangled Valley have not been recorded by either humans or changelings. Both groups came late to North America, after the formative processes of Earth and the Dreaming were already complete. What effect the Sundering or the Shattering had upon this region is unknown. Two sources, however, may be able to shed some light on this question: the Feathered Serpent, said to be a holdover from that ancient age; and the nunnehi. The former is elusive and noncommunicative; the latter, during their rare appearances, are hostile. For now, Kithain bards have little to sing about.

During the Interregnum, European explorers and traders flocked to North America. French missionaries and fur traders explored the Great Lakes by canoe after 1608 (the founding of Qu'Ébec by Samuel de Champlain). English traders penetrated from Hudson's Bay after 1670. The Europeans brought with them fables from their homeland, tall travelers' tales, and a sense of adventure. Nestled within these kernels of Dreaming were fae stowaways: redcaps and trolls came along with the English; satyrs with the lusty, rustic French.





Unsullied by European reason and uncharted human hand, the people of this New World possessed a deep Dreaming. The Kithain decided to stay. Some settled alongside mortals near Fort York (est. 1814). Ironically, this was not far from a nunnehi glen called “place of meeting” in the Huron tongue, from which the name “Toronto” was derived.

The city of Toronto grew from “muddy York” to one of the most metropolitan regions in North America. Similarly, the fae population multiplied. Many eshu had come northward since the 1850s. With the influx of European immigrants after 1910 came Kithain from Eastern Europe: sluagh (called vodianoy or grav-so – “grave-ghouls”), redcaps (polevik), satyrs (leshy) boggan (kobolts or domovoy), nockers (bergfolk or dreugar). Pooka (called “skogsra” in Sweden) came and went as they pleased. At some point during this colonization, the commoners named their realm the Dominion of Bosky Tarn.

From the turn of the twentieth century, the focus of our history shifts to the freehold of Tangled Valley. At some point, childlings constructed the first tree house on this sight. Through Kenning or D-n, they had located the nunnehi sacred glen for which Toronto was named. Those Amerindian spirits had left this region long before, retreating from the spreading Banality (to which they had not adapted, unlike commoner Kithain). Successive generations of childlings “discovered,” renovated, and adopted the rickety, child-made freehold.

In the 1950s, some child removed a sign from the safe, well-crafted and utterly boring tree house his mortal father had built and smuggled it down to the valley freehold. Henceforth, the freehold was known as Gangsters’ Hideaway. (Apparently, the childling’s gang of friends acquired this nickname for being little terrors.)

On a bright spring morning in 1969, the Dreaming changed for childlings of Gangsters’ Hideaway, the Dominion of Bosky Tarn, and commoners everywhere.

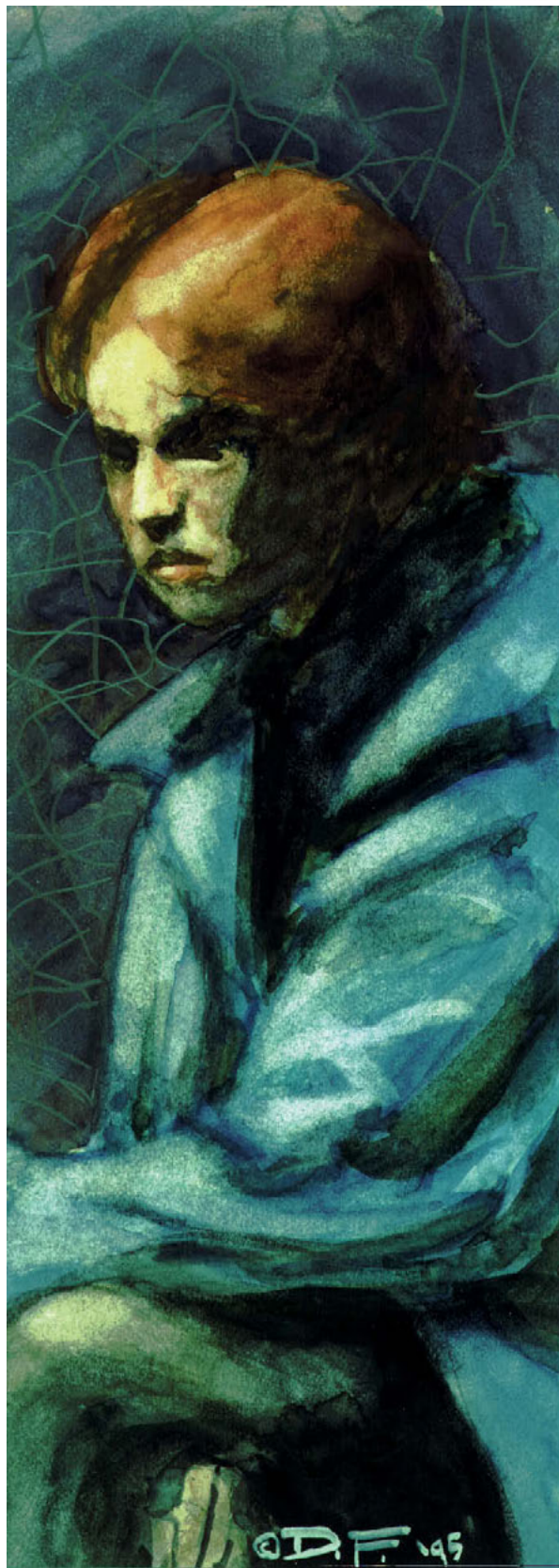
Jake Gallant (a.k.a. “Jem”) was doing some modifications on the freehold’s then-shingled roof, when he spotted a faerie host riding along the valley from the direction of the Endless Trod! Jem nearly fell from his perch. Backlit by golden sunlight, these fae riders were resplendent in high helmets and bright surcoats. They rode prancing chimerical mounts. Pennants ruffled, bridle-bells jingled, and a trumpet sounded. The noble sidhe had returned.

## From Whence They Came

Kithain seers (and most eshu) are keen to discover the ultimate destination of the Endless Trod. Any hopes of enlightenment from the returning sidhe, however, were quickly shattered. Lord Varlan was among that faerie troupe, but neither he nor any of his fellows remember their journey. Contact with Earch has stripped them of their memories (including the first few hours, days, even weeks after their arrival). The troupe might have come directly from Arcadia, or just as likely passed through other freeholds in their search for a home. We may never know....

Most local commoners welcomed the returning noble sidhe. They were willing to accept a new feudalism in exchange for enriched custom and fresh direction in their work to restore the Dreaming. Relations were good between noble and commoner. None of the local fae were present at the Beltaine Night of Iron Knives Massacre, so that event seemed distant and unimportant. (Some Unseelie suggest that the commoner envoy, Gray Matilda, actually conspired with those treacherous sidhe.) During the Accordance War, Warlord Dafyll found this region so supportive that he opted to press on to the East Coast without leaving a garrison or overlord. In fact, local Kithain were becoming a bit upset because they *still* had not been granted a monarch. Only after the coronation of King David was this region integrated into the feudal hierarchy. The Dominion of Bosky Tarn became the Duchy of Bosky Tarn within the Kingdom of Northern Ice. Queen Laurel of House Fiona was welcomed with all pomp and ceremony.

The Kithain of Tangled Valley are keenly aware of this history. Though the Gangsters are the latest generation of childlings, Sained within the last dozen years, they all have an insatiable fascination with Mythlore. Lord Varlan has experienced the history, having survived since the Resurgence without succumbing to the Undoing or Bedlam. Only Thresher is a bit vague, since he is but a fledgling.





## Characters

Gangsters' Hideaway is of small importance within the context of the Kingdom of Northern Ice, never mind Concordia. It produces little Glamour and has no military presence. However, it is distinguished by the Endless Trod and its affinity for "collecting" lost objects. Many sages hope that a study of Tangled Valley will yield secrets of the Dreamrealms.

Those visiting Tangled Valley may interact with three groups: the childling Gangsters; other Kithain, such as Lord Varlan or Thresher the Herald; and a smattering of outsiders (mortals, chimera, and other strange beings).

## The Gangsters

This motley consists of three commoner childlings: Jesse Franklin, Mike Potter, and Dianne Brazenhart (they never give their true names to strangers). Some consider them Callowfae. However, the Gangsters are oathbound to fulfill a very serious mission: to explore every triangular inch of enchanted land, snooping into all *cul-de-sacs*, ditches, parks, construction sites, and sewer openings within the city of Toronto.

## Jesse Franklin a.k.a. Tilutan

Jesse underwent his Chrysalis when he was five. One day soon after, while peering from his bedroom window, he saw a brightly colored lizard-bird perched on the white fence across the street. Strangely, passers-by seemed not to notice. Even more strange was the fact that this creature stared directly at him, head cocked. Jesse slipped out of the house while the baby sitter gossiped on the phone. He crossed the street and followed this Feathered Serpent into the gully, where he at once lost track of his quarry. Instead, he found Gangsters' Hideaway and a number of bigger boys in conference with an old man. These Kithain were surprised to see Jesse – they were only just then discussing how to approach the fledge. Jesse kept his Feathered Serpent to himself, so the others acknowledged that D'n (or Fate) had brought this fledge to them. The strangers – but mostly the old man, who called himself Lord Varlan – spoke to him about faerie tales made real. Jesse understood and accepted, and was welcomed into the Dreaming.

Jesse has since had five years to learn about Kithain society. This is a considerable length to "short-lived" fae, who are over-the-hill at 25. Additionally, his unconscious

contact with the Dreaming provides snatches of experience from many previous incarnations. Thus Jesse is wise beyond his years. For his knowledge and ability, Lord Varlan named him reeve of Tangled Valley.

In the mundane world, Jesse, a student in the 5th grade, is an exemplary child. He excels in French, English and the visual arts. On rainy days, when baseball is not an option, he spends recess in the library reading, primarily mythology and bigfoot stories (the encouraging librarian, Mrs. T, is a good contact). He is a Cub Scout, and has a number of badges to his name.

**Court:** Seelie

**Legacies:** Sage/Fool

**Seeming:** Childling

**Kith:** Eshu

**Physical:** Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

**Social:** Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3

**Mental:** Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

**Talents:** Alertness 2, Artistic Expression 1, Athletics 1, Dodge 2, Empathy 2, Expression 1, Instruction 1, Kenning 3

**Skills:** Leadership 1, Melee 1, Research 3, Stealth 1, Survival 1

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 2, History 1, Investigate 1, Linguistics 1 (French), Mythlore 3, Occult 1

**Arts:** Chicanery 1, Primal 1, Soothsay 3

**Realms:** Actor 1, Fae 3, Scene 1, Prop 2

**Backgrounds:** Contacts 1, Gremayre 3, Mentor 1

**Glamour:** 6

**Banality:** 1

**Willpower:** 2



**Image:** Jesse is a ten-year-old black boy. One of the ensembles his mother prepares for him in the morning consists of brown corduroys, red turtleneck, and brown Cougar shoes. To this Jesse adds a Mickey Mouse watch and a green-and-yellow Cub Scout scarf. He never leaves home without his baseball equipment.

Tilutan's fae form resembles an almost-grown-up Jesse, straight limbed and muscular, with a long but handsome face. To look into his sparkling, cobalt eyes is like peering at the night sky.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You are attentive, inquisitive, and curious. The more you learn from any source, the better you can teach others. Many require your guidance and advice, whether friend or stranger, mortal or fae. Even old Lord Varlan has much to learn about the true nature of the Dreaming. In your eyes, humans are wayward children. Beginning with your parents, you hope to show them the value of being good-natured and open-minded.

Yet for all your insight and responsibility, you sometimes yearn to be just a little kid.

## MIKE POTTER a.k.a. Spark

Mike's mother works most of the day as a secretary for a large corporation. Thus she has had to raise her son by proxy: notes tacked to the refrigerator, phone calls, and the occasional "popping in" of a neighbor. Consequently, Mike has gained too much freedom and received too little attention. As any child psychologist can attest, this volatile mix often results in a "problem child."

Mike's suspiciously innocent fae nature conceals a mind of pure and unadulterated mischief. During shop class, he secretly works on unauthorized projects: grappling hooks, clothes-peg guns, boomerangs, slingshots, smoke bombs, milk-carton and acetylene bombs, firecracker missiles and chimerical thingamajigs. After school, he performs field tests.

Little does any mortal know, but some of Mike's abnormal behavior is due to his being a nocker. He experienced his Chrysalis a year ago – about when his mother got that full-time position – and his Saining was performed by Tilutan. His fae nature predisposes him to smashing, monkey-wrenching and using sarcastic (and sometimes hurtful) humor. Like dwarves of legend, he collects things. This may involve digging through dumpsters, shoplifting from variety stores, or "borrowing" from friends. His collection places him high in the childhood Hierarchy of Possession. He is rewarded with great awe each time he reaches into his coat and produces matches, a magnifying glass, handcuffs, cherry bombs, a railroad spike, feather, quartz rock, piece of driftwood, mouse skull, or beaver stick.

**Court:** Seelie  
**Legacies:** Paladin/Wretch  
**House:** Commoner  
**Seeming:** Childling  
**Kith:** Nocker  
**Physical:** Strength 1, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3  
**Social:** Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2  
**Mental:** Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 5  
**Talents:** Alertness 3, Dodge 3, Expression 1, Kenning 1, Scrounging 1, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 3  
**Skills:** Crafts 3, Improvised Missile 3, Security 1, Slight of Hand 2, Stealth 1, Survival 1  
**Knowledges:** Enigmas 3, Investigation 1, Science 1  
**Arts:** Chicanery 2, Legerdemain 3  
**Realms:** Actor 1, Fae 1, Nature 1, Prop 2  
**Backgrounds:** Treasures 5, Chimera 3  
**Glamour:** 7  
**Banality:** 1  
**Willpower:** 4



**Image:** Mike is “ten-and-a-half-almost-eleven,” but small for his age. His black hair, cut page-boy style, throws his pale, freckled face into stark contrast. Unfortunately, he is a plain-looking boy. He usually wears black slacks, a long-sleeved white shirt (stained on the cuff with bicycle grease) and a black velvet cape made from a curtain. In fae form, Mike is no longer plain looking. His skin is waxy and translucent; his most prominent features are a raw pug-nose and large, ruddy mouth pulled into a perpetual half-grin. Due to a grossly twisted spine (existent but not so evident in his mortal form), he seems even smaller.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You are the Mephistopheles of childlings. Be courteous to adults, crude and taunting to teens, persuasive and confrontational with your peers. You are a champion of the down-trodden, among whom you count yourself. Lacking the physical means to defend your convictions, you rely on distant taunts and mischief, merry chases, and (if caught) stalwart martyrdom.

For most of your childhood, you have sought attention and affection, whether or not you are aware of this. Now that Dianne/Rusalka is courting you, you are unsure of how to react. What is worse, Dianne has misinterpreted your bashfulness as a proper response in the rite of *amour* – an indication to proceed!

## Dianne Brazenhart a.k.a. Rusalka

Dianne’s parents are rather well off. They try to give their daughter every opportunity to “find herself”: lessons in archery, piano, swimming, riding, self-defense, and dance; enrollment in the best summer camps and softball leagues; gentle urging into modeling and theater. Unlike many smothered children, Dianne enjoys all of these activities, and, as a student, has inspired many of her mentors. Nothing was a fad for her. This was due in part to her fae nature – satyrs are predisposed to art and athletics – and in part to Ms. Summers, her riding instructor, who encouraged her to enjoy childhood while she could. A nice bit of advice, that, coming from a mundane!

Dianne recently moved to Toronto from “out west.” In an effort to make friends with local Kithain, she followed Jesse and Mike to Gangsters’ Hideaway after school one day. At first, the two childlings were reluctant to let a stranger – and a girl, at that – into their oathcircle. All it took to convince them was her insistence of her



## Puzzle Pryx

This treasure appears to be a star-shaped, clear plastic bauble formed of interlocking "crystal" prisms. The dancing azure light at its core is a stored Chicanery cantrip.

The puzzle is not so much in opening the star - one tug of the correct prism causes the entire thing to fall apart, releasing the cantrip. Putting the buggie back together (in order to store another cantrip) is another matter. You must achieve three successes on a roll of Intelligence + Enigmas (difficulty 7). On a failure, you may try again, but each repeated attempt increases the difficulty by 1; sleeping on it returns the difficulty to 7.

The Puzzle Pryx currently contains this cantrip: Chicanery ☹☹ (Fugue), Fae ☹ (Hearty Commoner). No Bunk is required due to the nature of the cantrip, though the Bunk must be performed when the cantrip is placed in the Puzzle.

## Cat's Eye Marble

Simply toss this resin sphere into a room, under a bed, over a wall, wherever; wait until it stops rolling (or risk becoming dizzy); and imagine seeing through the Cat's Eye. The scene will magically spring to your mind's eye. Full 360-degree rotation is possible, but the peeper must rely on his own perception-based skills. Since sight is the only sense allowed, a knack for lip-reading (Intelligence + Linguistics, difficulty 8) would be a bonus. How the owner recovers the marble is her problem.

## Walkie Talkie

This chimerical toy has two uses. First, it allows for direct two-way communication with pencils, trees, squirrels, alien chimera, and most other creatures and objects within sight. The intelligence of the target is a consideration, as is the sort of information it might have, but Storytellers should be lenient. Rocks may remember the last person to walk over them. A squirrel might be persuaded to spy for the characters in exchange for a walnut.

The second use allows you to talk to intimate friends, however distant. Specifically, this refers to members of an oathcircle or Kinain. Targets can only respond to questions; they can never initiate a communication.

In either case, reception is crackly and broken. To mundanes, the user appears to be speaking into cupped hands.

tomboy nature - and a couple of noogies. She is now almost fully accepted.

Her greatest difficulty is managing to slip away from her protective parents. It's not just a matter of pretending to go to her friend's house, since Mrs. Brazenhart doesn't approve of "those sorts of children" (whatever she means by that). At the moment, Dianne juggles between skipping school and missing piano lessons.

**Court:** Seelie

**Legacies:** Troubadour/Savage

**Seeming:** Childling

**Kith:** Satyr

**Physical:** Strength 1, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5

**Social:** Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 4

**Mental:** Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

**Talents:** Alertness 1, Athletics 3, Brawl 1, Dodge 1, Empathy 2, Kenning 1

**Skills:** Archery 1, Etiquette 3, Performance 2, Ride 1, Stealth 2, Survival 2, Throwing 2

**Knowledges:** Computer 1, Enigmas 1, Linguistics 1 (Hebrew), Medicine 1, Theology 1

**Arts:** Primal 3, Wayfare 2

**Realms:** Actor 3, Fae 3, Nature 3

**Backgrounds:** Dreamers 3, Resources 4

**Glamour:** 5

**Banality:** 1

**Willpower:** 2

**Image:** For a thirteen-year-old, Dianne is well-developed. Yet even more fetching are her angelic face, hazel eyes, and fluttering laugh. When hanging out with the boys, she wears a white-and-saffron dress over black spandex shorts and sturdy sneakers. A gold-trimmed blue belt adds a touch of class; a matching ribbon holds back her long, chestnut hair.

Chapter Six: Gangsters' Hideaway

When seen by fae eyes, tiny horns sprout from her hairline and soft fur covers her entire body. She removes her shoes to wade, fetlock-deep, in the stream.

**Roleplaying Hints:** Your body and mind are forums for the interplay between proper behavior and total abandon. When you are excited, angered or scared, some primal instinct begins to stir within you. You like feeling this way, but are afraid that such behavior might scare your friends.

A favorite activity of yours is catching toads, grasshoppers, snakes and field mice; another is caring for wounded sparrows. As you cup these little creatures in your palms, peering intently into their tiny eyes, you wonder if you are trying to share their thoughts, or if you are regarding them as a predator would its prey.

The most beautiful, intriguing thing you have ever seen was a robin's egg transfixed by a thorn.

## Other Fae

Besides the Gangsters, two other Kithain regularly operate in and around Tangled Valley. The first is an old man known to all children and many adults as simply "Mr. Pigeon;" he is actually Varlan of House Liam, nominally lord of the freehold. Richard Lyons (or Thresher) is the other. His courier duties take him past the valley every so often.

### "Mr. Pigeon" a.k.a. Lord Varlan of House Liam (Exiled Noble)

Lord Varlan is a first-generation exile. He was part of the sidhe host who came to Tangled Valley in 1969 from Who Knows Where. His past is even more mysterious than that of most nobles. He arrived bearing a crown with eight large pearls (identifying him as a baron), a broken sword (symbol of an untrue knight), and a shield emblazoned with the basted tree of House Liam. If this were not damning enough, one of his fellow sidhe, a damsel of House Eiluned, vaguely remembered that he was involved in an incident of great rage and treachery. Everyone assumed the worst. Now no knight will serve him, nor any liege trust him with a freehold of significance.

At first, the sidhe were divided about whom to believe: the damsel of House Eiluned or Lord Varlan of House Liam. Neither house was considered particularly trustworthy. Judgment was ultimately based on three considerations: the damsel was apparently a seer of some ability; a true knight of House Gwydion vouched for her honesty; and finally, Lord Varlan did not deny the charges (he couldn't remember one way or the other). In fact, he accepted it without a fight. Half of his exile is self-imposed.

Disgraced, Lord Varlan has shunned court functions, noble deeds, even the management of his freehold. He is not an oppressive liege, but is arbitrary in his judgments and negligent in his duties. The jobs of organization of festivals and tax collection he leaves to his reeve, Tilutan. The local tithe is one-tenth a changeling's dross levied twice a year. From this, Varlan pays the Queen Laurel an annual scutage (tax in lieu of military service) in dross equal to the number of knights he should have: four.

Apparently retired in the real world, he collects unemployment and pension checks from the government. As a noble, he's adept at manipulating the system. He lives with a mortal wife in a middle-sized bungalow on the edge of Tangled Valley. Most of the time he spends caring for real pigeons and his chimerical falcon, Ban, in his garage-turned-mews.



**Court:** Unseelie

**Legacies:** Rogue/Courtier

**House:** Liam

**Seeming:** Grump

**Kith:** Sidhe

**Physical:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

**Social:** Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4

**Mental:** Perception 5, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

**Talents:** Expression 2, Intimidation 1, Kenning 3, Subterfuge 2

**Skills:** Animal Training 2, Etiquette 3, Falconry 3, Leadership 2, Melee 2, Survival 1

**Knowledges:** Area Lore 3 (Tangled Valley), Enigmas 1, Law 1, Mythlore 2, Politics 3

**Arts:** Primal 3, Sovereign 2

**Realms:** Actor 1, Fae 3, Nature 3

**Backgrounds:** Chimera 2 (Ban the Falcon), Freehold 1, Resources 3, Title 3, Treasure 2 (Glove of Ban)

**Glamour:** 3

**Banality:** 8

**Willpower:** 6

**Image:** “Mr. Pigeon” is a fifty-year-old man who denies his age by means of black hair-dye. He is overweight and not very handsome. He can often be seen hosing down the driveway or puttering about in his garage, wearing gray slacks and suspenders, a white sleeveless T-shirt, and black shoes. To other fae, Lord Varlan’s appearance is one more befitting of a sidhe. He is taller, leaner, more radiant; imagine a young Henry VIII. He owns a few articles of chimerical clothing – a cloud-lined cloak, hose woven from immortelle verdure, and outlandish living hats.

**Roleplaying Hints:** Your reputation is ruined. You have no future in court, no opportunity to prove your stewardship or leadership, no chance to win glory. This you have accepted. You can still have your revenge: you shall no longer recognize *noblesse oblige*. Yet a part of you yearns for the pageantry and intrigue of courtly life – if only you could be pardoned of your unnamed betrayal.

You favor shouting above talking, manipulation over trust, and ordering others rather than doing something yourself.



## Richard Lyons a.k.a. Thresher

Richard Lyons is a reckless cycle courier with a bitchin’ mountain bike. His shortcuts take him tearing through parks and nature trails, where he scatters bird-watchers and wildlife alike. Part of this bad attitude is completely due to his (until recently submerged) redcap heritage.

## Ban the Falcon

This exceptional creature can be classified as a chimerical monster. It is intelligent and totally loyal to Lord Varlan, who proved himself worthy of its friendship during some forgotten quest in Arcadia.

**Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Perception 5, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

**Abilities:** Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 3, Hunting 3

**Glamour:** 6, **Willpower:** 5

**Health Levels:** OK, -1, -2, -5

**Attack:** Claws/3 dice (when flying), Bite/2 dice

**Powers:**

- **Rend** – Because Ban is a creature of the Dreaming, mundane armor is ineffective against its talons. However, by expending a point of Glamour, Ban can rend (i.e. ignore) even chimerical armor.

## Glove of Ban

This chimerical gauntlet is crafted of a strong, yet supple, leather of unknown type (even to Mythlore). It is the only thing known which can resist the talons of Ban. Its secondary use allows a wearer to parry chimerical weapons (adding two dice to any soak damage from any chimerical weapons).

Sensing his dormant fae nature, Kithain have often used Richard as a herald. They would hire him to deliver false correspondence with a real message written in chimerical ink. Proximity to all of this enchantment triggered his Chrysalis. One such secret message was the first discrepancy Richard noticed after his Chrysalis two weeks ago. Other strangeness followed. Since Richard is always on the move, and happens to be stubborn and suspicious, Lord Varlan and Tilutan have found it difficult to counsel this fledgling; he refuses to listen to an “old fart” or “some squirt.”

Meanwhile, Richard is learning about his fae nature the hard way, via the Dream Dance. Richard is a tough young man, but the trauma is still intense. Lord Varlan and Tilutan are worried that, unless they can get through to Richard soon, they may lose him to madness or Banality or, worse still, the Dauntain.

Though Richard Lyon’s true name is Thresher, this secret is safe until – if ever – he experiences Saining.

**Court:** Unseelie

**Legacies:** Outlaw/Wayfarer

**Seeming:** Wilder

**Kith:** Redcap

**Physical:** Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

**Social:** Charisma 1, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3

**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

**Talents:** Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Intimidation 2, Kenning 1, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 2

**Skills:** Firearms 1, Orienteering 2, Repair 2, Ride Bicycle 3, Survival 1

**Knowledges:** Area Knowledge 3 (Toronto), Medicine 1, Occult 1

**Arts:** Primal 1, Soothsay 1, Wayfare 3

**Realms:** Fae 1, Scene 4

**Backgrounds:** Contacts 4, Resources 1

**Glamour:** 7

**Banality:** 8

**Willpower:** 6

**Image:** Richard is a ruggedly handsome jock, about twenty years old. Stubble and an earring give him the “bad-boy” look which seems to be so popular among women these days. He wears a red scarf over sandy-blond hair, bikers’ leggings, a football jersey, and fingerless gloves. As a cycle courier, his equipment includes a mountain bike, belt radio, and cellphone. He keeps a very real M1911 in his canvas backpack, just in case.

In fae form, Thresher’s black-button eyes roll back in his head when he opens his jaws. His mouth is wide and lipless and filled with two rows of triangular teeth. A frill of steel-woolish hair recedes from his flat forehead to cluster behind his huge ears. Thresher’s garb might remind an imaginative changeling of a medieval herald’s livery.

**Roleplaying Hints:** Lately, some weird shit’s been going on. You’ve hallucinated that some of your regular customers have rabbit ears or snake-skin. You imagined seeing this dinobird-thing in a valley along Codsell Avenue. During a couple of runs, you’ve blacked out and found yourself across the city a few minutes later.

Half the time, you seriously consider trying to harness these strange abilities and this “second sight” of yours. The rest of the time, you think it might be better to see a shrink. Or maybe someone’s been slipping you spiked brownies.

And why the hell does that crazy old man and bunch of brats keep harassing you? You’ll give ‘em a fairy tale they won’t forget....

## Sots and Gallain

Childlings in Toronto are constantly beset by banal talk such as: “Shouldn’t you be at home?” or “Get out of that dumpster!” or “First, you have to do your homework.” Even wilders or grumps get the occasional “Aren’t you a bit old for roleplaying games?” or “Now, grandfather, you really do need your rest.” Most Torontonians have Banality ratings of 6-8; the Banality of Autumn People and Dauntain (who are all too common here) might even be 9 or 10. This is not to say that Toronto lacks its share of artists, bohemians, or innocent children; just that they are few and far between.

Aside from humans, other dangers lurk in Toronto. Lord Varlan knows that vampires of a particularly brutal nature share his city. Unfortunately, his advice to “return home before dark” is often taken to be the foolish anxiety of an old grump. Before his Chrysalis, Richard Lyon met something huge and hairy (a werewolf?) while biking through Earl Bales park; the encounter shook him so much that he now carries his father’s service pistol. Besides these casual threats, nunnehi occasionally appear at Tangled Valley. They have yet to do anything more than spy or issue threats, but all but the most naive expect a war party to arrive at any moment. When this happens, the nunnehi will surely retake their ancestral glen, as it isn’t terribly well defended.

## The Feathered Serpent

This chimerical creature is about the size of a large parrot. It is neither bird nor lizard, but something in between. Tiny teeth and a hissing tongue fill its rounded yellow beak. Each two-foot wing is equipped with thick pinions and a pair of grasping claws. Yellow scales cover the breast and belly, but other parts are feathered jade: the ruff on its nape and pinions, and the fringe along its whiplike tail. The creature’s mantle is a shifting rainbow of violet, green, and gold. When hunted, it can change its coloration to brown, leaf-green, and gray, so that it is almost invisible when perfectly still.

Though many have tried, no one has yet been able to catch the Feathered Serpent. Many tales and prophecies surround this chimera. One predicts that only the best fae in the world – pure of heart, great of Glamour, and strong of will – can catch the beast; even then, the Feathered Serpent will come to him or her when least expected, and whisper deep secrets that trace back to the time before the Sundering.

Another tale claims that inside the creature's head is a golden pearl. Variations of this maintain that the fae who swallows this pearl will be gifted with either lowered Banality, a cure for any one illness or injury, dragon's sight (heightened Kenning?), Glamour, nothing, or a transformation into the next Feathered Serpent. This is all just wide-eyed speculation. Nobody knows anything for sure.

**Attributes:** Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

**Abilities:** Alertness 4, Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Dodge 5, Intimidation 3, Kenning 5, Mimicry 3, Climb 3, Stealth 4, Survival 4

**Glamour:** 10, **Willpower:** 8

**Health Levels:** OK, OK, OK, -1, -2, -5

**Attack:** Harmless Buffet

**Powers:**

- Voice of Mimicry – Though its cry usually has a quivering metallic resonance, it is said that this chimera can mimic any sound or voice, and project its voice 30 yards away. This power works like the Chicanery cantrip, Fuddle. Assume five successes, minus those the target achieves on a roll of Intelligence/Wits/Perception (player's choice) + Alertness (difficulty 6). The power costs 1 Glamour.

- Statue Game – Any fae who makes physical contact with the Feathered Serpent becomes fossilized in chimerical stone for 1-10 turns. The target may roll Willpower, each success reducing the duration by one turn, or slip into her mortal coil to escape immediately. This power costs 2 Glamour.

## Story Ideas

Each of the following outlines should inspire an evening of storytelling. They are substantial enough be "director's scripts" for Storytellers, yet sufficiently brief that players can develop their own "full-length treatments." Storytellers are encouraged to try their hand at improvising a story from one of these ideas.

- A Binding Oath

Unless the chronicle is set around Tangled Valley, your first story should concern the characters establishing their relationship with the local Kithain. The Gangsters truly trust only other childlings (wilders and grumps are always treated politely but cautiously). To join their oathcircle, one must undergo a secret ritual. This could involve eating a worm, giving up one's favorite possession, enduring a "wimp test" (a minor rite of self-scarification), peeing on the Old Oak, being Fool for a Day, or recovering some lost treasure.

Other Kithain may consider swearing allegiance to Lord Varlan and joining his household. This would take the old sidhe completely by surprise, softening his demeanor and restoring a measure of self-respect. He would treat this vassal extremely well (granting arms and titles) and seriously consider her every counsel. However, for being associated with House Liam and a suspected traitor, Lord Varlan's new vassal will receive a penalty of +2 to the difficulty of all Social rolls involving Seelie.

- Forcible Conversion

Richard Lyons is on the verge of becoming one of the Dauntain. It is in every fae's best interest to save him. He will probably listen to a fellow wilder – a tough male he can respect or an attractive female who gets his attention. Gaining his trust will tax one's persuasive ability and empathy to the limit.

In his "hallucinogenic" state, Richard will perceive any large group as a threat, especially if everyone is in fae form. This could lead to him fighting and fleeing, and an epic chase across the city. Once caught, Richard will then have to be forcibly restrained while someone helps him to understand his fae nature.

In this story, the Troupe can juggle a plethora of archetypal themes: the "maiden's lap" ploy, a cinematic chase, mistaken identity, reluctant conflict between allies, and mentor instructing the skeptical pupil.

- Forgotten But Unforgiven

A notable sidhe knight arrives at the freehold of Tangled Valley, requests an audience with Lord Varlan, and promptly throws down the gauntlet. He claims to have been wronged many years ago in Arcadia, and now demands retribution. The baron is a capable swordsman, but his opponent is praised in song across Concordia. If possible, Lord Varlan exercises his right to choose a champion; he just might single out a nearby character.

A duel to the death is one solution. More prudent characters may try to get to the bottom of this mystery. If they ask how the knight remembers this slight, he admits that he doesn't; a damsel of House Eiluned informed him. She proves to be the same lady who damned Lord Varlan with her recollection so long ago. Now the questions change. Does this damsel truly remember? If she is lying, then what does she have against the baron? Or is she a pawn of some malicious creature of the Dreaming? Come to think of it, what really happened in Arcadia?

This story could blossom into something very like a murder mystery. The characters become detectives, trying to track down and piece together various Gremayre accounts in order to recreate the events leading up to Lord Varlan's unofficial exile. If successful, the troupe could



vindicate the baron (and receive his undying gratitude) or damn him irrevocably (earning his eternal enmity).

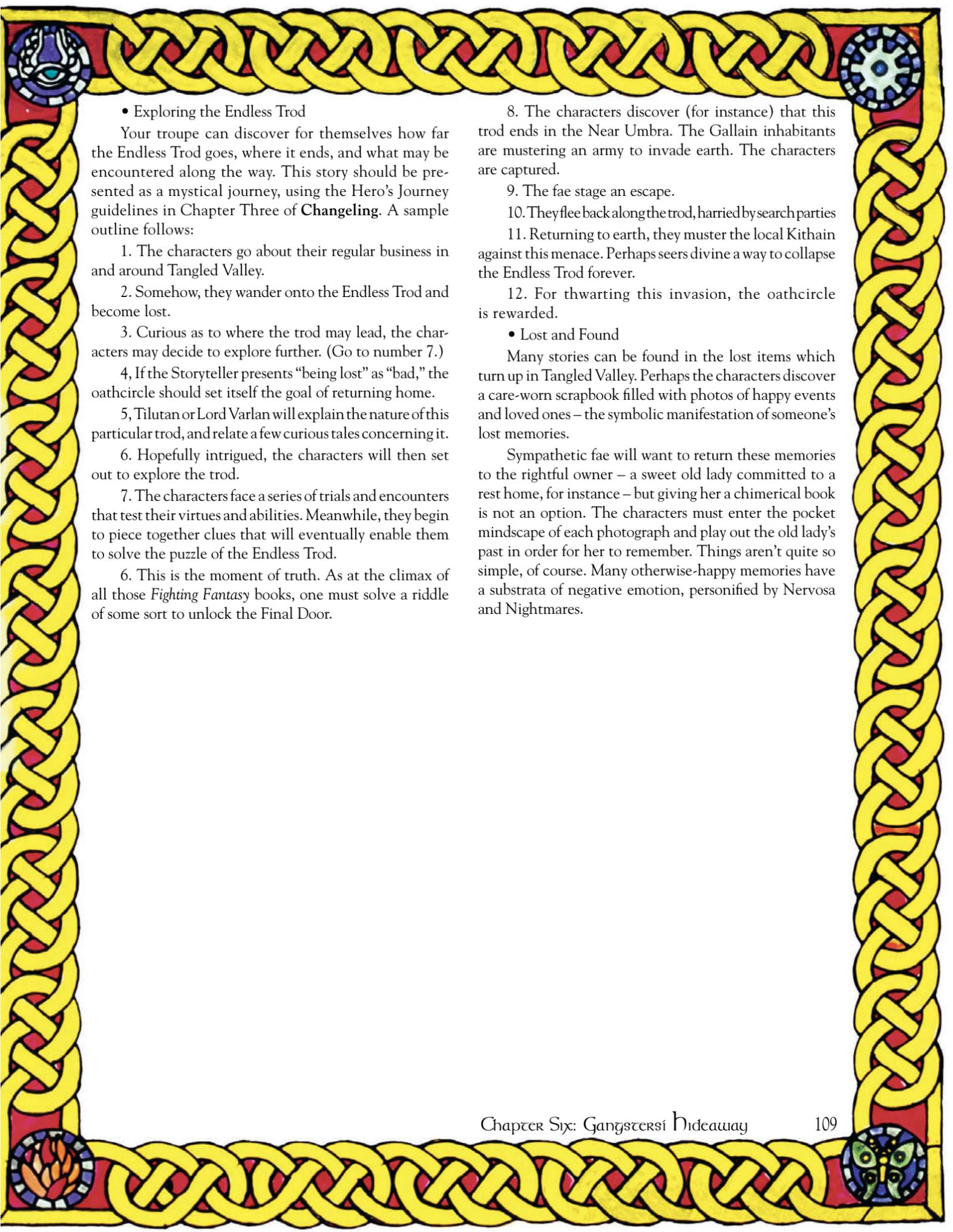
•Fear Itself

While finishing up some repairs on Gangsters' Hide-away after dinner, Jesse/Tilutan saw something chilling and dark staring at him from the nearby sewer grill. Frozen with fear, he waited there, eyes closed, until much later than his curfew. Eventually, he gathered up enough courage to bolt past it, scramble up and out of the valley, and run home. Now he is too afraid to return. The Gangsters or Lord Varlan might ask other fae to explore the culvert and thus vanquish the terror, either figuratively or literally. Then reeve Tilutan can get back to his duty.

Another story-hook has the oathcircle walking, riding, or driving past the entrance to Tangled Valley. One character sees something slither under the fence and into the gully. Presumably, they give chase. However, all they find is slime on the sewer grating.

The Storyteller has a number of options concerning the true nature of this beastie: Nightmare or Nervosa, fomori or Black Spiral Dancer (if familiar with **Werewolf: The Apocalypse**), or figment of the imagination.

One interesting question: By bringing the light of discovery into yet another mysterious frontier, might not the characters be furthering Banality?



- Exploring the Endless Trod

Your troupe can discover for themselves how far the Endless Trod goes, where it ends, and what may be encountered along the way. This story should be presented as a mystical journey, using the Hero's Journey guidelines in Chapter Three of **Changeling**. A sample outline follows:

1. The characters go about their regular business in and around Tangled Valley.

2. Somehow, they wander onto the Endless Trod and become lost.

3. Curious as to where the trod may lead, the characters may decide to explore further. (Go to number 7.)

4. If the Storyteller presents "being lost" as "bad," the oathcircle should set itself the goal of returning home.

5. Tilutan or Lord Varlan will explain the nature of this particular trod, and relate a few curious tales concerning it.

6. Hopefully intrigued, the characters will then set out to explore the trod.

7. The characters face a series of trials and encounters that test their virtues and abilities. Meanwhile, they begin to piece together clues that will eventually enable them to solve the puzzle of the Endless Trod.

6. This is the moment of truth. As at the climax of all those *Fighting Fantasy* books, one must solve a riddle of some sort to unlock the Final Door.

8. The characters discover (for instance) that this trod ends in the Near Umbra. The Gallain inhabitants are mustering an army to invade earth. The characters are captured.

9. The fae stage an escape.

10. They flee back along the trod, harried by search parties

11. Returning to earth, they muster the local Kithain against this menace. Perhaps seers divine a way to collapse the Endless Trod forever.

12. For thwarting this invasion, the oathcircle is rewarded.

- Lost and Found

Many stories can be found in the lost items which turn up in Tangled Valley. Perhaps the characters discover a care-worn scrapbook filled with photos of happy events and loved ones – the symbolic manifestation of someone's lost memories.

Sympathetic fae will want to return these memories to the rightful owner – a sweet old lady committed to a rest home, for instance – but giving her a chimerical book is not an option. The characters must enter the pocket mindscape of each photograph and play out the old lady's past in order for her to remember. Things aren't quite so simple, of course. Many otherwise-happy memories have a substrata of negative emotion, personified by Nervosa and Nightmares.



# Chapter Seven: Terebinthea

By Kevin Andrew Murphy

*"As a matter of fact, we're almost certain that ghouls  
and werewolves occupy high positions at City Hall."*

– Edgar Frog, *The Lost Boys*

The freehold of Terebinthea is one of the most confused and yet most hopeful projects known to fae history. Above the University of California, Santa Cruz is situated a beautiful sylvan glen known as Elfland, the splendor of which has, unfortunately, been shattered by University expansion – specifically the building of a ninth college. Though not yet wholly destroyed by the encroaching civilization, Elfland's days are numbered; it is merely a matter of time before the wooded castle of enchantment fades from the Dreaming.

It is for this reason that a new freehold has been created, deeper within the shadows of the redwood forest. Though possessing none of the natural splendor of the glen of Elfland, this freehold, known as Terebinthea, is an attempt to salvage some of Elfland's fading Glamour. If the architects are inspired to design a structure of grace and beauty, and the redwood circles are not totally destroyed, some of the Glamour of lost Elfland may be preserved, and the woodland palace that surrounds the hall of learning may flourish once again.

## Terebinthea and Elfland

To the north of U.C. Santa Cruz, a path leads off from one of the fire trails behind the Crown-Merrill apartments, and heads northwest to Elfland. Students have been coming to the redwood cathedrals of Elfland since the early sixties. In keeping with tradition, they bring some trinket to leave "for the elves;" thus, many of the stumps and trees are festooned with glass beads and candlewax and other small items given as offerings. Small hand-painted signs designate sites along the trails, such as Dragon's Den (a hollow under the roots of a redwood amid a series of pools), the Council Chamber (a redwood cathedral with a throne-shaped stump), the Bridge to Heaven and the Descent into Hell (a redwood fallen to create a living bridge across a deep

gorge), the Grove of Mirrors (a smaller redwood circle with chips of mirror placed into the bark of one of the trees), Gnome's Path and various others. Different groves have blankets, candles, corkscrews and books of poetry left out for visitors to use and enjoy.

Unfortunately, many of the lesser sites have now been destroyed, and orange slashes mark other trees of the redwood circles for future decimation. In consequence, measures have been taken to move the Elfland freehold to a safer haven deep within the forest.

This new freehold is named Terebinthea. The smaller trinkets and talismans from Elfland will be rescued and taken here, a place where Glamour may run free and beauty will remain untouched. In the center of Terebinthea stands a totem pole, surrounded by a circle of stones, with four tokens placed around it to represent the four elements: a shell, for water; a feather, for air; a candle, for fire; and a stone, for earth. The totem pole, which dates back to the 1960s, once stood in a plywood maze in the Cowell Meadow. When the maze was destroyed, the pole was stolen and moved from place to place by successive generations of students. At one point, it came into the hands of the University administration, who planned to erect it publicly at one of the colleges, like the larger pole in the Porter Quad. A bold group of young students managed to steal it back, however, and brought it to Terebinthea, where it was reconsecrated.

Near the totem pole is Cat's Cradle, a tiny den nestled within a circle of redwoods, created by a web of interwoven tree branches. Visitors place statuettes and amulets of cats in various niches, thus transforming the small glen into a shrine to felines. Many other such sites are in the process of creation nearby.

When clothed in the Glamour of dreams, Elfland is a forest castle of fallen splendor, its walls breached and torn apart by the bulldozers of university expansion. Each of the sites – the council chamber, the Grove of Mirrors – lies in elegant disrepair, the rich and beautiful chimerical tapestries and furnishings now transferred to the new Palace of Dreams. An old and sickly chimerical dragon lies in its den before the enchanted pool, once a wellspring for the stream that meanders through the glen. Refusing to move, the dragon comes closer to death each day as the Glamour in the pool either dries up or is diverted to the new freehold.

Terebinthea, to fae sight, is still under construction, a new chimerical castle with bits and pieces of the old included in each of the chambers and fortifications. Cat's Cradle is already complete, a glorious shrine to dreaming eyes, spun about with chimerical yarn of all colors and home to dozens of chimerical cats and kittens. The totems on the totem pole can speak as well, though they seldom will to those who do not respect the old dreams of the land.



Even to immortal eyes, however, the fae castle is a strange spectacle, not only because the dreams are new, but because its construction is comprised of such an interesting mix. The creation of Terebinthea – and the salvage of Elfland – has been the work of mages as well as changelings, and this is most clearly reflected in the architecture. Mage magick has made the totem pole into the new wellspring – or node – of the freehold, diverting Glamour (Quintessence to mages) to the new site via manipulation of the ley lines and enchantments on the pole.

Terebinthea is also heavily warded against vampires, werewolves and most spirits – though not, of course, against faeries or witches. A Kenning roll is necessary for changelings to recognize these witch-weavings, though a subsequent Occult roll must be made to fathom their true purpose. In order for a vampire, werewolf or wraith to enter the freehold, the wards must first be opened or broken, and these wards are quite potent – for good reason.

According to the records kept at the nearby Scottish castle in Bonny Doon, one of King David's Western Holdings, the ruler of Terebinthea is Lady Gwynhyfar Mira, a sidhe noble of House Eiluned. According to the sidhe, Lady Mira has recently named a young troll, Peter Olso, as her Champion. Lady Mira is also said to keep a very private, and rather eccentric, court. She hosts no revels apart from a midsummer pageant at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, and keeps out of sidhe politics as much as possible, both Seelie and Unseelie. All others at Terebinthea are listed as her chamberlains and stewards, personages of little importance to fae politics.

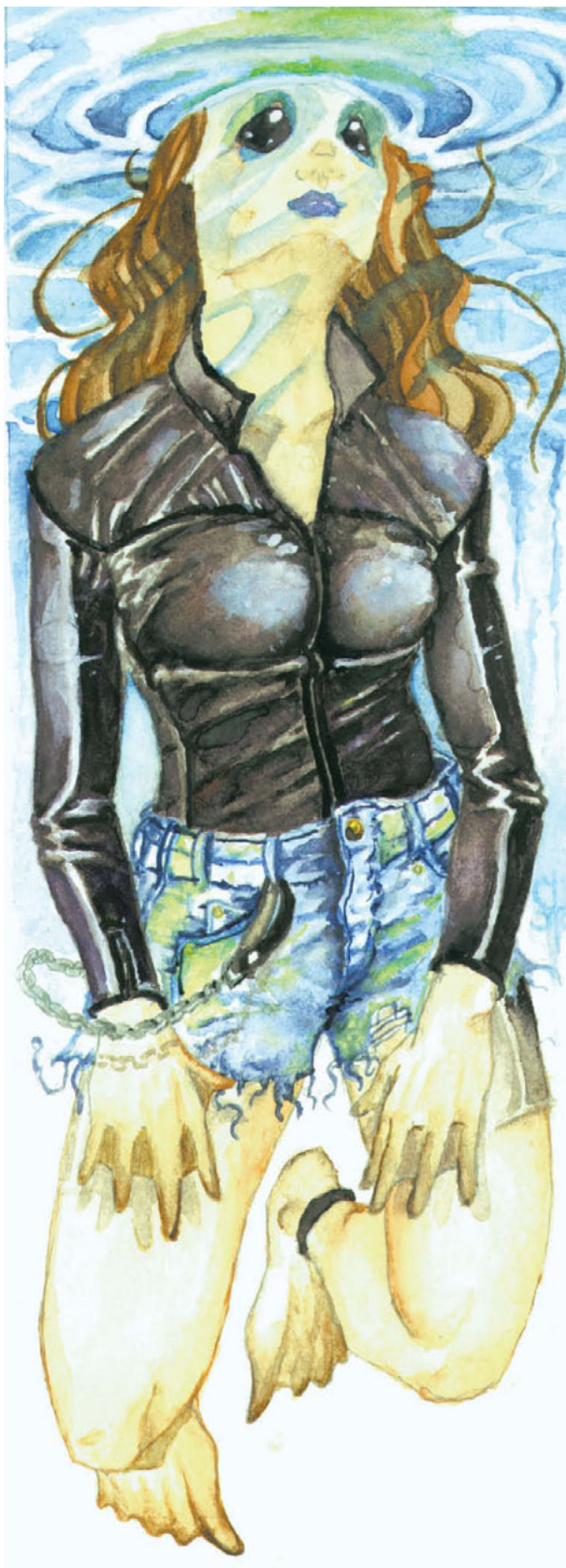
As is often the case with House Eiluned, the truth is, of course, rather different. Lady Mira has used her sidhe patents and peerage to keep the Court of King David, and the rest of the sidhe nobility, out of Terebinthea's hair, while she holds court in her own fashion and her people work to salvage Elfland. For purposes of internal politics, Lady Mira has already abdicated the rulership of the freehold, such as it is, and taken for herself the role of Steward, while Peter has become lord. If, in fact, Terebinthea could be said to have a Lord, since the general feel of the place is more like an anarchist collective than any true household.

## The Fey Circle

The Terebinthea freehold is unique in that the Kithain who make this their home also share it with a mage Chantry. This group, known as the Fey Circle, is led by Dustin Carver, who also serves as an advisor to Lord Peter.

Most of the Circle practice the faerie tradition of Witchcraft, a path of magickal learning involving Celtic and Teutonic fae charms, though the group also includes a Son of Ether, a Virtual Adept and a Hollow One. Not





all members of this Chantry actually accept the existence of the fae; indeed, many strongly question Dustin's sanity, though none would dare oppose him as long as he continues to supply the Chantry with Quintessence. In the past, relationships were strained – especially over the issue of rightful shares of Glamour/Quintessence; however, since the destruction of Elfland, both mages and changelings have come to realize that the only way to save any of the enchantment is to work together, and what stands now is a sense of solidarity, if not community.

Each member of the coven is a distinct personality. These include: Olive Whitethorne, a very pretty, very New Age, and very traditional Wiccan witch and Adept of Life and Time magicks, who believes both in faeries and in Dustin; Bartholomew "Barry" Heidecker, a tall, blond physics grad student – and student of Mind and Spirit magicks – who has built optical sensors that can detect chimera (which, in typical Son of Ether fashion, he refers to as "hallucinatory anomalies") as well as changelings and the enchanted ("hallucination-prone"); Jim Grover, a political activist and part-time eco-terrorist who talks to trees – and who, with Life and Forces, can get them to listen; Petula Martlett, a newly Awakened Verbena and Afro-American women's rights activist who is quite certain that Dustin is insane; Caitlin Amber, a Virtual Adept and techno-pagan, who doesn't believe in faeries, but is willing to play along for sake of politics; and Gordon "Eightball" Geary, a Hollow One who is on the run from the Men in Black, the Nephandi and several demons – and who desperately wants to believe in changelings and anything else that might save his life and soul.

Of the mages, only Dustin, Olive and Barry can recognize changelings for what they are – and Barry requires scanners, goggles and oscilloscopes, and thus is easy to avoid (and a favorite subject of jokes by Craig and other pooka). Gordon is highly sensitive, but differently attuned: he is able to sense changelings as Awakened beings, but cannot perceive their fae seemings. However, as a result of his infernal dealings, he has an instinctive distrust of the Unseelie and can sense their legacies. By use of an old Eightball, he can also perform divinations of startling accuracy.

Petula and Caitlin have no fae affinity and generally believe the changelings of the area to be delusionary at worst and Marauder hedge magicians at best. Jim Grover, however, is an actual Marauder, though, because his delusions coincide with much of normal and fae reality, no one has figured it out as yet.



## Outside Relations

Situated on the California coast just south of San Francisco, Santa Cruz is a crossroads – physically and spiritually – and as such is as popular with the supernatural of the World of Darkness as it is with the banal mundanes. The quintessential surf town's name means "Holy Cross," and this is exactly what it is: a nexus of dreams and spiritual energy, as much from the population who lives and visits there as from the paths of the ley lines.

Brujah vampires, either inspired by *The Lost Boys*, or the inspiration for it, cruise the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk regularly, at least in the summer months. This causes some friction with the local changeling population, for the sidhe, by tradition, consider the Boardwalk to be Festival Grounds, a place for the trooping faeries of both the Seelie and Unseelie courts to set up their pavilions and engage in parades, pomp and pageantry. Of course, while fae Glamour may spin the Giant Dipper and the Loof Carousel into crystalline confections of dreams and delight, this generally goes unnoticed by the bloodsuckers (except for those of the Toreador clan), so most direct conflicts are avoided.

A large pack of Fianna werewolves live in Boulder Creek, farther up in the Santa Cruz mountains. Of greater importance, however, are the ruins of Mission Santa Cruz

in the square before Holy Cross Church. This, along with numerous murder sites around town, has become a haunt for wraiths. (Santa Cruz was, at least at one time, murder capitol of the world, as several serial killers operated there at once. The City Council, not wishing to publicize this, insisted the town be renamed Santa Carla in *The Lost Boys*.)

The major draw for the supernatural, however, is the Camino Real, the "Royal Road" – a series of ley lines mapped out in the early days of European conquest, linking all of the California Missions together in a chain of power. The Portola Party marked the ground for Mission Santa Cruz on the site that is now the Holy Cross Church. The Ohlone natives who were caught here and forcibly impressed into Christianity died of dysentery, malnutrition and other ills – as did the rest of the Native Americans subjected to the horrors of the Missions. Their wraiths still haunt the Camino Real.

In banal reality, the Camino Real is Mission Street – but to the fae (as well as to mages), it is truly the Royal Road, a path which can be picked out clearly and easily with fae Kenning (or mage Awareness). There is just as much dark power here as light, however; among the Unseelie, it is whispered that, when the Mission bells ring, the wraiths of those murdered by the holy fathers are led up and down the road in chains.

# The Chimera

## Orzobal, the Black Griffin

The chimera known as Orzobal is, in fact, an ancient Umbrood spirit, and has only recently – over the past three hundred years or so – taken on the seeming of a black griffin. Before this he was a condor spirit. When the Portola Party came up the coast, mapping the ley line of the Camino Real and marking the sites for the Missions, they had the misapprehension that this new land was actually the Island of California, mentioned in the popular fantasy novel of the time, *Las Sergas de Esplandian*. With this thought in mind, they took the California condors to be the man-eating black-winged griffins also mentioned in the novel (though the beautiful black-skinned amazon women were never found).

As a result, the land was named California and the condor took *Griffin* for its Latin name – and before any other spirit could seize the power of the strange new dream, Orzobal took it, for the black griffin's shape was even stranger and more terrifying than the thunderbird he liked to assume.

Orzobal was canny and opportunistic and thus changed with the times, clothing himself and increasing his power with the dreams of foreigners, while the fortunes of other native spirits waned with the deaths of those who had believed in them. Orzobal's gamble paid off, and where he was once a minor spirit, he is now a major Umbrood and wields power both in his own right, and through his ability to influence the other supernatural beings who look up to him – including those changelings who believe him to be a mere chimera, albeit a powerful one. Mages view him as a Node guardian,



while Garou generally believe him to be a Totem spirit – the best approximation of the truth, although he is not the red gryphon with which most are familiar.

Orzobal did not burn his bridges as he gained power, and still has friends among the Native American spirits and dreams, many of whom consider him to be a traitor, but a greater number of which appreciate his pragmatism and his help in aiding their return. The totem poles are among the works he has inspired.

**Attributes:** Strength 8, Dexterity 4, Stamina 6, Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

**Abilities:** Alertness 3, Athletics 4, Brawl 6, Dodge 3, Empathy 2, Intimidation 6, Subterfuge 4, Leadership 3, Enigmas 3, Linguistics 4, Mythlore 6, Occult 4

**Glamour:** 8, **Willpower:** 10

**Health Levels:** OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -2, -2, -2, -5

**Attacks:** Bite 5 dice; Claw 6 dice

### Powers:

- Thunder – Orzobal may summon bolts of lightning that cause 8 dice of damage. For the cost of a Glamour he may also summon a thunderstorm.

- Presence – Orzobal's presence is so great that an individual must defeat him in an opposed Willpower roll in order to make any offensive action against him.

## Plato the Banana Slug

Plato began as a minor banana slug chimera when the University was founded, but grew more powerful when the student body elected to name themselves the Banana Slugs, and he became the campus mascot. Of course, this was unofficial, and when, in the early eighties, the University established an official basketball team, the administration chose the sea lion to be the school's mascot. Even a nearly unanimous vote by the student body for the banana slug over the sea lion failed to change their minds on the issue. However, a prolonged boycott of the University's "official" sea lion merchandise – and the underground manufacture and sale of banana slug T-shirts – eventually forced a change. The financial scandal in the chancellor's office didn't hurt, either. The banana slug is now the official mascot.

**Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Charisma 5, Manipulation 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 6, Wits 2

**Abilities:** Alertness 4, Empathy 4, Leadership 3, Performance 3, Stealth 4, Enigmas 2, Law 4, Linguistics 7, Mythlore 3, Occult 2, Politics 5, Science 4

**Glamour:** 7, **Willpower:** 7

**Health Levels:** OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5

**Attacks:** None



**Powers:** Plato has only one power, but it is a significant one – he knows everything about the university. Everything. This ranges from the personal politics and private lives of all the students and faculty to each word in every book in the McHenry library and all the unpublished research notes of the university professors and graduate students, including what can be accessed through the Internet. Of course, he also respects privacy and scholarship, so he doesn't generally volunteer any of this information unless it is somehow necessary for the survival of the university or the student body. Also, by appearing in the dreams of students and alumni – or by asking changelings outright – he can successfully influence the course of university events.

**Note:** As mascot, Plato is the personification of the collective unconscious of the University – its *zeitgeist* – and while his chimerical form may be disrupted, he will always reform so long as the University and the student body still exist. The only way to destroy Plato is to destroy the University itself.

## The Court

### Gwynhyfar Mira

Lady Mira, Gwynhyfar to most, is the *de facto* ruler of Terebinthea, for the simple reason that she is the only ranking sidhe noble in the glen and so the most apt to win the respect of the court of King David. Lady Mira is well liked by those in the area, and manages to keep the peace as well as maintain a great deal of mystery and wonder. In her mortal seeming, she works in a bookstore in Capitola and tells stories for friends, both mortal and Kithain. The Banality of the world is beginning to wear upon her, however, and she fears the time when she will pass from the world of fae and will no longer be able to play steward to Terebinthea. Luckily, a replacement has presented himself: Peter, a young troll with an overactive pituitary gland and aggrandized sense of self-importance. Lady Mira has already given him active stewardship of the glen, for whatever it's worth. After all, Dustin Carver, the mage, was here before either of them, as was Orzobal the Griffin, and Lady Mira is fairly certain that any who hold power do so only with their approval.

**Court:** Seelie

**Legacies:** Troubadour/Fool

**House:** Eiluned

**Seeming:** Grump

**Kith:** Sidhe

**Physical:** Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

**Social:** Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 6

**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

**Talents:** Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Dodge 3, Empathy 4, Expression 3, Kenning 4, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 2, Fine Art 4

**Skills:** Etiquette 3, Leadership 3, Performance 3, Stealth 2

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 2, Investigation 1, Medicine 1, Mythlore 3, Occult 3, Art History 3

**Arts:** Chicanery 4, Legerdemain 2, Sovereign 3

**Realms:** Actor 4, Fae 4, Nature 1, Props 3

**Backgrounds:** Contacts 2, Dreamers 4, Gremayre 2, Holdings 5, Resources 2, Retinue 2, Title 2, Treasures 3

**Glamour:** 6

**Banality:** 7

**Willpower:** 7

**Treasures:** Lady Mira possesses a magic paintbrush with which she may paint chimera into existence. To use this treasure, she must expend a point of Glamour and make a roll of Dexterity + Fine Art (difficulty 7) to bring the dream into being. One success summons a chimera that will last for a few moments, while five or more summons a chimera permanently from the Dreaming. As with all art, however, Lady Mira does not know the true nature of her creation until she is finished, and the chimera which spring from her brush are under no compunctions to obey her orders.

**Image:** In human guise, Gwynhyfar is a young thirty, with a long-limbed, small, athletic frame, waist-length brown hair and notably elfin features. Her fae seeming is only more so, as the pixieish quality of her features is enhanced. In both guises she wears plain clothes – jeans, T-shirts, etc. – as opposed to the courtly garb affected by many sidhe. When necessary, she can dress in a style to please even the most discerning Seelie noble, but just as often, she flouts all rules of dress and propriety.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You are a fae creature and you know it. Play the riddle and the enigma, then spring the joke at the end, and always, *always*, make them laugh and keep them guessing. You are an entertainer and an artist. Even at your most Unseelie, you would never Ravage another. Not because it's wrong, but because there's no sport in it, no fun and ultimately no satisfaction. Reverie and Rapture are the true paths to Glamour, and when you tell a story for others, you delight both in their reaction and in your own creation. When you paint a picture, it pleases you if it pleases others, and it pleases you to inspire them, but ultimately, the one you please and inspire is yourself.



## Peter "Redwood" Oslo

Peter considers himself to be the Lord of Terebintheia – a fact no one really disputes, including Lady Mira. Peter, moreover, considers the Jotuns (the Giants) to be the true rulers of the fae. According to his philosophy, only a portion of the Jotuns (and the lesser ones at that) were ever subjugated by the Alfarr (the Sidhe), and in any case, the elves abandoned their claim when they left Midgard (Earth) for Alfheim (Arcadia). Peter also considers nobility to be an antiquated system – but no one is going to claim pedigree over him. He has gained the favor of the chimerical griffin, Orzobal, who gave him one of his feathers as mark of his kingship. In human guise, he's an undeclared freshperson from Oakes college who's leaning toward an Earth Sciences major and absolutely refuses to play basketball.

**Court:** Seelie

**Legacies:** Courtier/Beast

**Seeming:** Wilder

**Kith:** Troll

**Physical:** Strength 6, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

**Social:** Charisma 4, Manipulation 2, Appearance 4

**Mental:** Perception 2, Intelligence 5, Wits 3

**Talents:** Alertness 2, Athletics 3, Brawl 1, Dodge 2, Expression 3, Intimidation 4, Kenning 2

**Skills:** Drive 1, Etiquette 2, Leadership 4, Melee 3, Survival 3

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 2, Mythlore 5 (Norse Mythology), Occult 3

**Arts:** Legerdemain 3, Sovereign 4

**Realms:** Fae 3, Nature 4

**Backgrounds:** Holdings 5, Mentor 2, Resources 1, Title 1 (Very high pedigree to some Giants, not accorded any respect by most Sidhe)

**Glamour:** 5

**Banality:** 4

**Willpower:** 5

**Image:** Peter is gigantic, even for a troll. In human guise, he stands over seven feet tall, and is still growing. In fae form, he reaches almost ten feet. He's also a very handsome and striking troll, with long, flame-red hair, a neatly trimmed red beard, emerald green eyes and a fondness for medieval costumes. He doesn't have the horns that are common to trolls, and appears much like the classic storybook giant, which he claims are tokens of his noble blood – the marks of Surtur, the fire giant of Norse myth.

**Roleplaying Hints:** The sidhe can quote their pedigrees all they want – you can quote yours right back at them, along with all the related legends and myths. Though you enjoy your height and strength, you are enraged by the suggestion that this somehow makes you inherently stupid or that you must play basketball or be someone's grunt. Your body is yours to do with exactly as you please, and your troll stubbornness makes you even more firmly committed to this. If anyone – especially a sidhe noble – attempts to pull rank on you, bore them to death with a long discourse on Norse mythology, Irish history and Greek creation myths. If they really annoy you, mention the legend that the dark and light elves crawled from the body of the frost giant, Ymir, in the form of black and white maggots. If anyone beats you or seriously gets the upper hand, ask if they're going to chain you to a rock and have a vulture peck out your liver. Still, though you will never accept anyone as your superior (at least by birth), you are comfortable accepting people as equals, or at least as friends. Gwynhyfar (Lady Mira to the sidhe) is cool, if just because she's helping you to run Terebinthea the way it should be run – free and open to one and all, a safe haven from outside politics.



## BERTO "Rattlesnake" MUÖÖZ

Berto is a nunnehi and the major liaison between the nunnehi and Terebinthea. He is also one of the few who realizes that Orzobal is actually an ancient nunnehi spirit that has changed with the times, and is somewhat jealous that Peter Oslo has gained the thunderbird's favor. Berto doesn't like Peter much, but he has respect for the troll's activism and cultural pride. Berto is a junior majoring in political science at Stevenson, and is a minority rights activist. He grew up in Watsonville to the south and knows a great deal about local politics.

**Court:** Seelie

**Legacies:** Paladin/Outlaw

**Seeming:** Wilder

**Kith:** Nunnehi

**Physical:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5

**Social:** Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2

**Mental:** Perception 5, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

**Talents:** Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 4, Dodge 3, Expression 1, Intimidation 3, Kenning 4, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 3

**Skills:** Drive 1, Etiquette 1, Leadership 2, Melee 4, Survival 2

**Knowledges:** Law 3, Linguistics 2, Mythlore 2, Politics 4

**Arts:** Primal 3, Soothsay 2, Sovereign 2

**Realms:** Actor 3, Fae 3, Nature 3

**Backgrounds:** Contacts 3, Dreamers 2, Greymyre 2

**Glamour:** 8

**Banality:** 5

**Willpower:** 5

**Image:** Berto is half Ohlone, one quarter Portuguese, and one quarter Mexican mestizo. He looks very Native American, with long black hair, which is usually braided, and small, slightly slanted, dark brown eyes. He is of medium height. His canines are unusually pointed, like fangs; to fae Kenning they are even longer and drip venom. He usually dresses in jeans and some variety of Aztec pride T-shirt, usually one with a rattlesnake motif. He can also take the form of a California diamondback rattlesnake.

**Roleplaying Hints:** Your people got the short end of the stick, and that sucks, but you don't have time to be bitter. There's too much work to do, and you don't believe that people are responsible for the deeds of their ancestors, so long as they admit they were wrong and are doing something to make amends. Do everything you can to help your people reclaim what was lost – language, customs, treasures. Give everyone who crosses you fair warning, though; it's part of your nature. You'd really like nothing better than to lounge around on the beach in the warm sand, but there's too damn much to do.

**Note:** Berto may shift into the form of a rattlesnake for the cost of one Glamour. He also has the ability to step into the Umbra, though how he does this remains a secret. When Berto is used in play, nunnehi Arts and Realms function just as they do for any other Kithain, only their Bunks are different. They tend to be more Native American in function, i.e. shaking a rattle, dancing, wearing a mask, etc. For further information on the nunnehi, see *Rage Across Appalachia* for **Werewolf: The Apocalypse, Second Edition**.



## DUSTIN CARVER

One of the first students of U.C. Santa Cruz, Dustin Carver is also the eldest of the Fey Circle, a Verbena coven that has been operating in the area since the sixties. His Awakening as a mage was slow and gradual; Dustin's Avatar took the form of an elven scout – or a Vulcan spy once *Star Trek* came on the air – and led him through a series of quests and mysteries. As a result, Dustin became convinced that he was an elf, until the day of the moon landing and the arrival of the sidhe. Confronted with this (and a good deal of haughty elven nobles), Dustin was forced to revise his opinions, though he still believes that he has elven blood in his veins, and he still follows the faerie tradition of Verbena magecraft. He knows more of the Realms of Dreams than most changelings ever will, and moreover has contacts among the Garou, making him the most powerful member of the court of Terebinthea, apart from the Griffin Orzobal. However, he prefers the role of advisor to kingmaker, and the role of kingmaker to lord, and so he has allowed Lady Mira and Peter Oslo to share the crown between them.

**Nature:** Visionary

**Demeanor:** Architect

**Essence:** Questing

**Tradition:** Verbena

**Physical:** Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

**Social:** Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3

**Mental:** Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 3

**Talents:** Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Awareness 4, Dodge 5, Intuition 3, Subterfuge 4

**Knowledges:** Drive 2, Firearms 4, Leadership 3, Meditation 4, Stealth 5, Survival 3

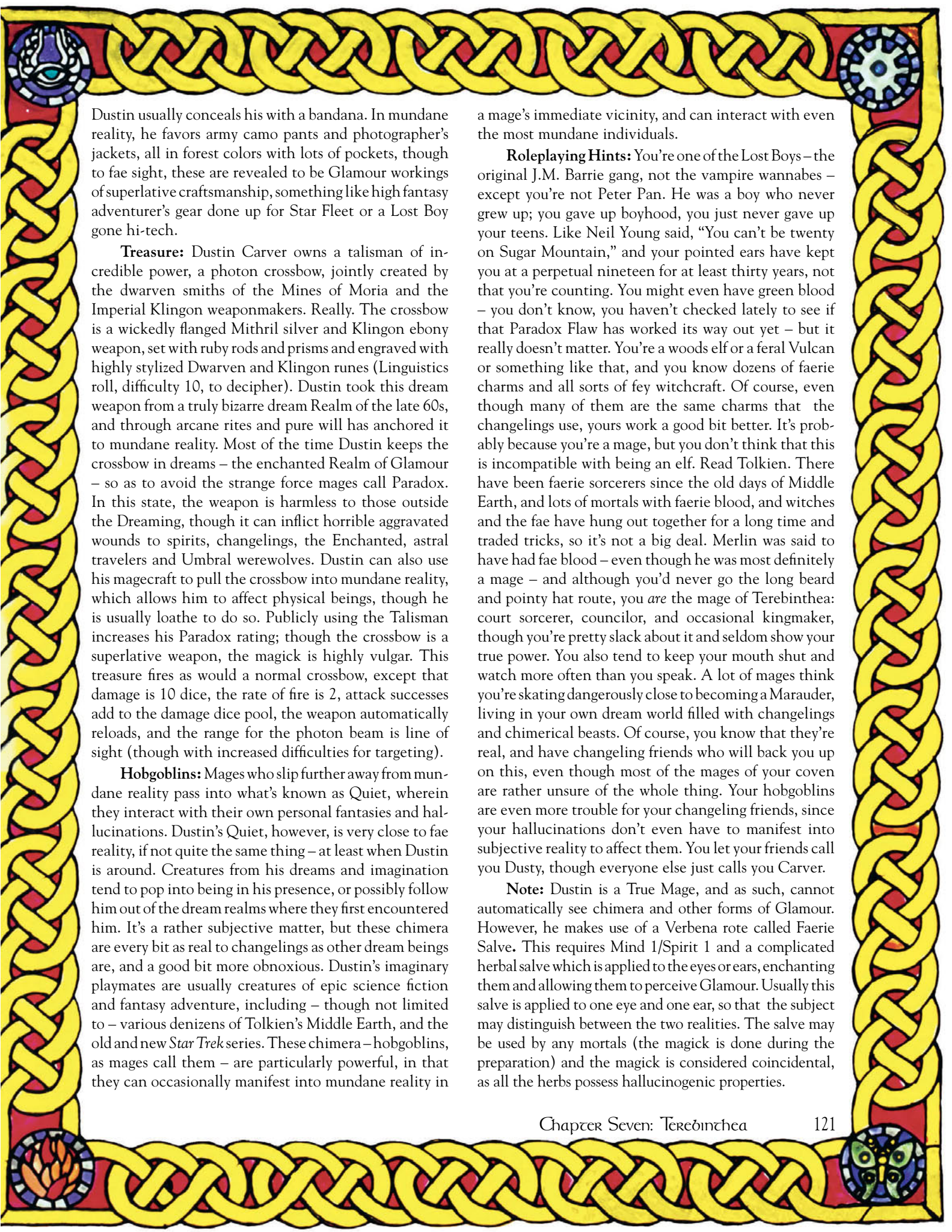
**Skills:** Cosmology 3, Enigmas 2, Investigation 3, Medicine 4, Occult 3, Science 2

**Spheres:** Correspondence 1, Forces 2, Life 4, Mind 3, Prime 2, Spirit 3, Time 1 (Storytellers who do not have access to **Mage: The Ascension, Second Edition** may duplicate mage magick by giving Dustin high level Arts and Realms, along with the ability to choose his Bunks. However, vulgar magick – magick which violates the laws of reality – is more difficult than those charms that may be explained away as coincidence.)

**Backgrounds:** Contacts 3, Avatar 4

**Arete** 6, **Willpower** 7, **Quintessence** 8, **Paradox** 4

**Image:** Small and fine-boned, Dustin stands no more than 5'5" and looks to be about twenty, although he's actually over fifty. He has longish, dark brown hair, green eyes, and pointed ears, like Mr. Spock or Peter Pan or a Tolkien elf. This is what mages call a Paradox Flaw, and



Dustin usually conceals his with a bandana. In mundane reality, he favors army camo pants and photographer's jackets, all in forest colors with lots of pockets, though to fae sight, these are revealed to be Glamour workings of superlative craftsmanship, something like high fantasy adventurer's gear done up for Star Fleet or a Lost Boy gone hi-tech.

**Treasure:** Dustin Carver owns a talisman of incredible power, a photon crossbow, jointly created by the dwarven smiths of the Mines of Moria and the Imperial Klingon weaponmakers. Really. The crossbow is a wickedly flanged Mithril silver and Klingon ebony weapon, set with ruby rods and prisms and engraved with highly stylized Dwarven and Klingon runes (Linguistics roll, difficulty 10, to decipher). Dustin took this dream weapon from a truly bizarre dream Realm of the late 60s, and through arcane rites and pure will has anchored it to mundane reality. Most of the time Dustin keeps the crossbow in dreams – the enchanted Realm of Glamour – so as to avoid the strange force mages call Paradox. In this state, the weapon is harmless to those outside the Dreaming, though it can inflict horrible aggravated wounds to spirits, changelings, the Enchanted, astral travelers and Umbral werewolves. Dustin can also use his magecraft to pull the crossbow into mundane reality, which allows him to affect physical beings, though he is usually loathe to do so. Publicly using the Talisman increases his Paradox rating; though the crossbow is a superlative weapon, the magick is highly vulgar. This treasure fires as would a normal crossbow, except that damage is 10 dice, the rate of fire is 2, attack successes add to the damage dice pool, the weapon automatically reloads, and the range for the photon beam is line of sight (though with increased difficulties for targeting).

**Hobgoblins:** Mages who slip further away from mundane reality pass into what's known as Quiet, wherein they interact with their own personal fantasies and hallucinations. Dustin's Quiet, however, is very close to fae reality, if not quite the same thing – at least when Dustin is around. Creatures from his dreams and imagination tend to pop into being in his presence, or possibly follow him out of the dream realms where they first encountered him. It's a rather subjective matter, but these chimera are every bit as real to changelings as other dream beings are, and a good bit more obnoxious. Dustin's imaginary playmates are usually creatures of epic science fiction and fantasy adventure, including – though not limited to – various denizens of Tolkien's Middle Earth, and the old and new *Star Trek* series. These chimera – hobgoblins, as mages call them – are particularly powerful, in that they can occasionally manifest into mundane reality in

a mage's immediate vicinity, and can interact with even the most mundane individuals.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You're one of the Lost Boys – the original J.M. Barrie gang, not the vampire wannabes – except you're not Peter Pan. He was a boy who never grew up; you gave up boyhood, you just never gave up your teens. Like Neil Young said, "You can't be twenty on Sugar Mountain," and your pointed ears have kept you at a perpetual nineteen for at least thirty years, not that you're counting. You might even have green blood – you don't know, you haven't checked lately to see if that Paradox Flaw has worked its way out yet – but it really doesn't matter. You're a woods elf or a feral Vulcan or something like that, and you know dozens of faerie charms and all sorts of fey witchcraft. Of course, even though many of them are the same charms that the changelings use, yours work a good bit better. It's probably because you're a mage, but you don't think that this is incompatible with being an elf. Read Tolkien. There have been faerie sorcerers since the old days of Middle Earth, and lots of mortals with faerie blood, and witches and the fae have hung out together for a long time and traded tricks, so it's not a big deal. Merlin was said to have had fae blood – even though he was most definitely a mage – and although you'd never go the long beard and pointy hat route, you *are* the mage of Terebinthea: court sorcerer, councilor, and occasional kingmaker, though you're pretty slack about it and seldom show your true power. You also tend to keep your mouth shut and watch more often than you speak. A lot of mages think you're skating dangerously close to becoming a Marauder, living in your own dream world filled with changelings and chimerical beasts. Of course, you know that they're real, and have changeling friends who will back you up on this, even though most of the mages of your coven are rather unsure of the whole thing. Your hobgoblins are even more trouble for your changeling friends, since your hallucinations don't even have to manifest into subjective reality to affect them. You let your friends call you Dusty, though everyone else just calls you Carver.

**Note:** Dustin is a True Mage, and as such, cannot automatically see chimera and other forms of Glamour. However, he makes use of a Verbenā rote called Faerie Salve. This requires Mind 1/Spirit 1 and a complicated herbal salve which is applied to the eyes or ears, enchanting them and allowing them to perceive Glamour. Usually this salve is applied to one eye and one ear, so that the subject may distinguish between the two realities. The salve may be used by any mortals (the magick is done during the preparation) and the magick is considered coincidental, as all the herbs possess hallucinogenic properties.

# The Commoners

## Alaric "Ric" Selkirk

Ric Selkirk is a wilder Selkie, very new to his fae nature. After the death of his great-uncle Laughlin, his changeling inheritance – and his skinchanger's skin – came to him in the form of a sealskin Edwardian greatcoat, the Glamour of which he immediately transferred to a wetsuit. He's had some tutoring in the ways of the fae from Kate, an Irish Selkie, but she's a riddle, and has only told him enough about the politics of landbound Kithain and the mysterious Mer-Courts to intrigue him, not to give him any true knowledge. Like all Selkies, Ric is caught at Land's Edge, between the Overwater and the Undersea. But since he's also a surfer, that's where he's the happiest.

**Court:** Seelie

**Legacies:** Paladin/Peacock

**Seeming:** Wilder

**Kith:** Selkie

**Physical:** Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

**Social:** Charisma 3, Manipulation 1, Appearance 3

**Mental:** Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

**Talents:** Alertness 3, Athletics 4, Empathy 3, Kenning 3

**Skills:** Performance 2, Survival 3

**Knowledges:** Enigmas 3, Mythlore 2

**Arts:** Primal 2, Sovereign 2, Wayfare 3

**Realms:** Actor 2, Nature 4, Scene 3

**Backgrounds:** Dreamers 2 (local surfers), Gremayre 5, Mentor 2 (Kate, Wilder Selkie), Resources 3, Retinue 1 (Marc, older brother)

**Glamour:** 4

**Banality:** 3

**Willpower:** 4

**Image:** In his mortal guise, Ric is a "gremmie," a young surfer – fourteen, 5'5", stocky, with saltwater blond hair, large brown eyes and oversized hands and feet (which are slightly webbed, as are those of all Selkies). His fae guise is very much the same, except that his hair drips with chimerical seawater and his wetsuit becomes a sealskin. He may also take the form of a harbor seal, both in mortal and fae seeming.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You're extremely bewildered by all that's happened to you. Discovering that your natural talent in the water was actually a supernatural gift proved to be a real shock, and you almost wish that your brother had gotten the legacy instead. But not quite – you love the ocean too much to ever give this up. Though you're uncomfortable and clumsy on land, you shine in the water. You've always wanted to be the best, but now that you

are, it's kind of scary to know that you're only going to get better. But if being the best surfer on the beach means standing as an inspiration to all the other guys, you'll drink it right up – with shy modesty.



## Marcus "Marc" Selkirk

Marc is Ric's older brother, and would have been Laughlin's choice as successor if the Selkie blood had not flowed so strongly in Ric. Marc is kinain, with more fae blood than most, and a number of faerie Gifts – as well as a fortune in shipwreck gold left to him by his great-uncle. He's only slightly jealous of Ric's changeling legacy, and he's also far more adventurous – Marc has found a mermaid's grotto and flirted with a mermaid, who taught him the Siren's Call in exchange for his name. In all likelihood, Marc will be lost to the Undersea very soon.

**Court:** Seelie Kinain

**Legacies:** Wayfarer/Fool

**Seeming:** Wilder

**Kith:** Selkie Kinain

**Physical:** Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

**Social:** Charisma 5, Manipulation 4, Appearance 5

**Mental:** Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

**Talents:** Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Empathy 2, Expression 4, Streetwise 2, Seduction 3

**Skills:** Drive 2, Etiquette 1, Leadership 4, Performance 3, Survival 3

**Knowledges:** Investigation 1, Occult 1, Philosophy 2

**Backgrounds:** Contacts 2 (local counterculture), Mentor 1 (Ric, brother), Resources 5

**Glamour:** 5

**Banality:** 3

**Willpower:** 4

**Image:** Marc is a surf god – 6'5", blond hair, blue eyes, perpetual tan, broad shoulders and a deep, hearty laugh. And only nineteen. Even though he's now as rich as King Croesus, he still dresses in ratty surf shorts, tie-dyed T-shirts and Birkenstocks.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You are one of those people everyone wants to hate because you're too good to be true, but they can't, because damn it, you're a really great guy. You're bigger and better looking – and now richer – than most guys will ever be, but you don't lord it over anyone. Luck of the draw, you get what you get, and it doesn't make you any better if you got dealt a better hand than the other guys. Just luckier. You've always felt a little guilty that you got everything before your brother, but when he outstripped you as a surfer – and at fourteen – you were both happy for him and mad at yourself for slacking off and letting him beat you. That he got the selkie's gift and you did not is something you can't really blame him for either – luck of the draw and all that – and you've discovered a few of your own faerie gifts yourself, so you weren't completely left out. A few chests of Spanish gold also helped to sweeten the deal, plus there's that mermaid you met. You're a braggart and a storyteller; you will inflate everyone's deeds out of proportion, including your own, and are a source of inspiration in your own right. You'd like to go travel the world, but right now there's strange enough things

in your own backyard, and anyway, the gremmie [Ric] needs some looking after, or he's going to get in over his head. Speak in a thick surf dialect, laugh a lot and act dumber than you are – life is good and you're here to make people realize it.

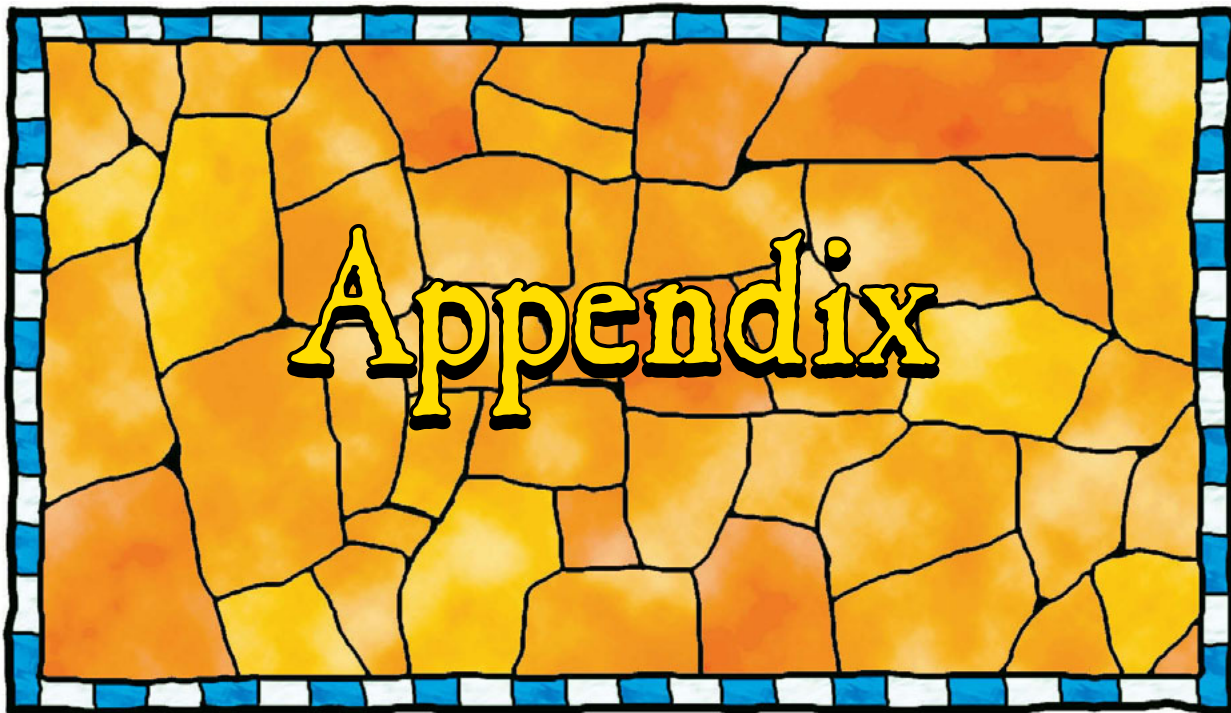
## Story Ideas

- Dustin Carver's hobgoblins come to life, and the characters have to deal not only with powerful chimera, but chimera that can step into reality.

- Marc Selkirk disappears. Ric doesn't know if he's been taken by the mermaids, or if he's been stolen by undersea formori. Using the art of Wayfare, it should be possible to explore the undersea and search, but what the characters find is anybody's guess.

- A sidhe seneschal comes from the court of King David and wishes to view the new freehold of Terebinthea. Lady Mira, of course, hasn't informed the High Court that they have the glen on a timeshare with witches, and Dustin and his coven are using it on the night the seneschal said he was coming. Can the characters get the seneschal lost in the woods long enough to allow the witches enough time to finish their ritual and clear out?

- The old dragon wishes to die along with Elfland. Can the characters persuade him to move to a new den in Terebinthea? Like many dragons, he must obey if called by his name, but no one has ever learned what this is. Can the characters discover it, and if so, should they use it, or should they respect the old chimera's wishes?



## What is a freehold?

Freeholds are extremely important for Kithain, for they are the one place to which changelings may retreat in order to escape the pressing weight of Banality. As detailed in this book, freeholds come in many shapes and sizes; indeed, no two freeholds are exactly alike. Most of the confusion comes in differentiating between a freehold and a glade.

A freehold is an area, held by an individual changeling, in which the supply of Glamour is greatly concentrated. It may be a glade, although not all glades are freeholds. While freeholds are often created (and hence are artificial sources of Glamour), glades are naturally occurring wellsprings, found in the most hidden corners of the world. They exist because people dream of such places. They are extremely rare, and, when discovered, their location is kept a closely guarded secret.

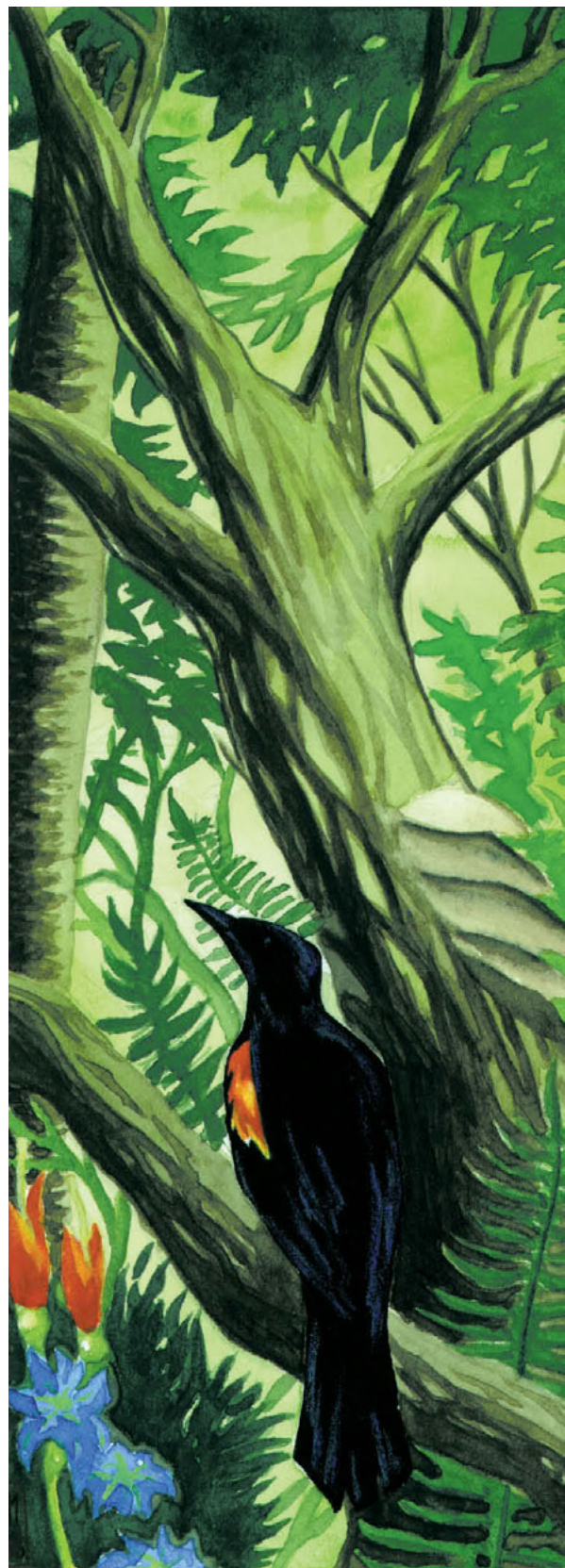
Similar to the balefire of a freehold, a glade has what is known as a sacred stone. Sacred stones may take many forms: some are made to be tall standing stones, others are carved with ancient glyphs, some rest almost unnoticed at the base of a tree. Regardless of the form it takes, the sacred stone is the basis of the glade's power. To remove or destroy it is to strip the glade of its magical energy.

## Creation of a Freehold

Creating a freehold is no simple matter, though it is by no means impossible. One must find a place with a certain amount of natural Glamour. Such locations are extremely rare these days, and are most often discovered only by luck or chance. Indeed, some Kithain have spent years in the search for one. The site need not be a glade or other permanently enchanted place, but it must at least have some touch of Glamour. When the location has been established, the creator of the freehold must light a torch from the balefire of another freehold and bear it to the newly established haven. With this torch she must light a new fire, investing a certain amount of her own Glamour into it as well. This fire then becomes the balefire for the freehold. The amount of Glamour invested determines the level of the freehold (never over five) and is permanently subtracted from the character's Glamour rating.

## Ownership of a Freehold

A changeling may come to own a freehold in one of three ways: she may actually create the freehold (see above: Creation of a Freehold), it may be given to her, or she may discover it. If the new freehold or glade is



discovered or is given to the character, she must swear an oath to protect it. The character must also invest an amount of temporary Glamour equal to the level of the freehold. If a freehold owned by a character should ever be destroyed, the character will gain a number of temporary Banality points equal to the level of the freehold. Once a freehold has been claimed by a changeling, no other may claim it until the owner's death — unless he himself chooses to give it away.

## Gaining Glamour

The owner of a freehold may use it as a source to renew his Glamour, though he may instead choose to grant this power to another as a favor. In order to obtain Glamour from a freehold, the character must sleep and dream in the light of the balefire, or near the sacred stone of the glade. Upon awakening, he will find that he has recovered a number of Glamour equal to the freehold's rating. Of course, the character may never gain Glamour above the number of her initial Glamour rating. Glades function slightly differently, in that the first person to dream within the glade is the one to gain Glamour.

## Reaving

It is possible to gain Glamour from a freehold even if one is not the owner or has not been given permission; this is commonly known as Reaving. In a manner similar Ravaging, Reaving risks causing permanent damage to the freehold from which the Glamour was gleaned. The designated owner may also Reave his own freehold in an attempt to gain more than the daily allowance of Glamour. In order to do this, the character must simply be in the presence of the balefire or sacred stone and will the Glamour forth. The player then rolls the character's Banality rating (difficulty 7). The number of successes determines the amount of Glamour gained. If this number is higher than the actual level of the freehold, the character will still gain that amount of Glamour, but the freehold will lose one level for every two successes over its initial rating. Additionally, a botch will automatically cause the level of the freehold to be reduced by one.

King David has strictly outlawed Reaving, as the destruction of a freehold is considered to be one of the most horrible crimes a Kithain can commit.

## Permanent Cantrips

The owner of a freehold may cast certain enchantments upon it which will then become permanent. This is performed only rarely, as the cost to the caster may be quite significant. Any character who wishes to create a lasting cantrip within a freehold must pay a cost of one

permanent Glamour for each level of the Art used. Additionally, the character attempting the cantrip must possess the Realm, Fae ••••• (Dweomer of Glamour) as well as the appropriate level of Realm, Scene. These two must be used in combination, and the additional Glamour paid, though this Glamour is only a temporary expenditure.

The cost of casting a permanent cantrip can be shared by characters who are oathbound. Only one of them need possess the appropriate Realms, though all involved must possess the appropriate level of the Art being cast. This is always a willing sacrifice; it cannot be forced from a subject — although certain cantrips may coerce a subject into parting with some of their Glamour.

Nobles, and some commoners, often use this type of enchantment to create wonders that defy imagination. Nearly any fantastic setting, from an ancient medieval fortress to a gothic mansion, may be created through the clever use of cantrips.

## Trods

Once the gateways to Arcadia, these paths are still used by the Kithain as a means of traveling from freehold to freehold. Though they provide a quicker means to reach one's destination, they are not always the most convenient route to take. Most trods are keyed to the seasons, and may only be opened with ease during certain times of the year. Some may only be opened under certain conditions.

### Opening a Trod

In order to open a trod, a character must possess the Art, Wayfare ••• (Portal Passage) and the Realm, Fae ••••• (Dweomer of Glamour). The number of successes needed to open a given trod varies greatly depending upon the circumstances. If all the conditions for opening the trod have been met — proper season, riddles answered, sacrifices made, etc. — then only one success is necessary. If, however, none of the proper conditions are met, then as many as ten successes may be needed, to be decided according to the discretion of the Storyteller.

## Following the Trod

Upon entering a trod, a character leaves the real world and enters the realm of the Dreaming. He does not, however, appear instantaneously at his destination; rather, he must make an actual journey. Though it may take one of countless different forms, the journey almost always involves an adventure of some kind.

Upon his entering the trod, a silver pathway becomes visible to the traveler, and this guides him toward his intended destination. As long as the traveler stays on the silver path, he is relatively safe, though chimerical creatures will attempt to deceive him and lead him astray. As well, there are places in which the path becomes extremely hard to follow, and the traveler must solve a collection of riddles and puzzles before he may be able to continue.

Leaving the path means almost certain doom. Nightmares too horrible to describe live in the depths of the Dreaming, waiting for the unsuspecting Kithain who unwittingly strays from his intended route. There are many tales told of individuals who lost their way and were never seen again; others returned with stories of horrible creatures of nightmare and hideous deathtraps. Some whisper that hidden paths leading to Arcadia may be discovered if one dares to venture into the unknown. All that can be said for sure is that most who have strayed from the path of the trod are later found huddled near the entrance, temporarily (or sometimes permanently) sundered from their fae nature.

## The Passage of Time

Time does not function within a trod as it does in the real world. A great deal of time may seem to pass for the changeling, though almost no time at all has passed in the real world. The length of the journey within the trod is often, though not always, a close approximation of how long it would really take to traverse the distance; in the real world, however, it may be that only seconds passed.

# WHAT IS THE ONYX PATH?

SPRING 2012: (VTM) V20 COMPANION

SUMMER 2012: (VTM) CHILDREN OF THE REVOLUTION

FALL 2012: (VTM) HUNTERS HUNTED 2

FALL 2012: (WTA) WEREWOLF: THE APOCALYPSE - 20TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

WINTER 2012-2013: (MTA) MAGE CONVENTION BOOK

WINTER 2012-2013: (VTM) ANARCHS UNBOUND



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